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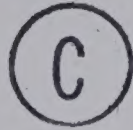
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TRADITION AND CHANGE IN TWO AFRICAN POETS

by



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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

A central question which not only critics but partisans of various persuasions pose about African literature is the extent to which it is a continuation of traditional African culture. One of the ways of investigating this problem is to examine in detail two bodies of poetry, one in French by Tchicaya U Tam'si, the other in English by Christopher Okigbo.

U Tam'si's immediate background is the mid-century franco-phone movement of Negritude, which claimed to be a revival of African culture. Certain literary aspects of Negritude do recall traditional African poetics (the use of "surreal" language, the social role and orientation of the poet), but on the whole the literary and printed context of that poetry makes it very different from tribal poetry. U Tam'si, furthermore, worked some ideological and thematic variations upon Negritude. On the one hand, then, one must affirm that this modern poetry borrows little specific from the old African poetry, that it exists within a different sociological situation, that its clearest connection with tribal poetry is its own insistence that it is its ancestor. On the other hand, it is fair to say that this insistence upon and constant

reference to the historical past provides a springboard for further poetry, a "literary platform". A prose work by U Tam'si exemplifies the way that this ideological and "reified" tradition can be assimilated into a literary culture.

The analysis of Okigbo's poetry reveals this process in greater detail, for his poetry occasionally has as its very purpose the integration of African themes and myths. What is especially interesting is that the same mechanism brought to bear upon African materials is also applied to Western ones, frequently to the same end. Sociological distance from the tribal past prevented Okigbo from directly using these materials, in the same way it prevented U Tam'si. But because Western elements and intimately personal ones undergo an identical process, the implication, reinforced by a few examples from Western literatures, is that literary tradition as a whole is of an abstract and reconstructed nature. Influence is largely a question of "intentionality," in the sense that modern writers make literature out of previous literature, and select their own models.

The significance of this to African literature is that, although these poets are creating in a manner similar to European poets, they are able, almost at will, to create a tradition in the historical space behind them. In the case of some poets, such as U Tam'si, this tradition serves as a starting point for later poetic discoveries.

In the case of others, such as Okigbo, this tradition can be put to a variety of uses: a source of myths, themes, and models for poetic forms, a screen against which the poet's cultural eclecticism is played.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Cahier	<u>Cahier d'un retour au pays natal</u> , Césaire.
Ep.	<u>Epitomé</u> , U Tam'si.
FB.	<u>Feu de brousse</u> , U Tam'si.
HG.	<u>Heavensgate</u> , Okigbo.
L.	<u>Limits</u> , Okigbo.
PT.	"Path of Thunder", Okigbo.
Ven.	<u>le Ventre</u> , U Tam'si.

See the Bibliography for complete information.

With the exception of le Ventre, which has not been re-edited, and unless otherwise noted, all U Tam'si page numbers refer to the recent (1970) editions.

others were of West Indian origin, and it is generally agreed that they have been more bitter about the West than the Africans. Even now, when Africa has achieved at least the forms of national independence, much of the West Indies remain subject to Europe. An African poet like Senghor had to suffer colonialism in his native land, and exile in France as a student. But he always had a home in Africa. A poet like Césaire experienced both colonialism and exile, but was further divorced from what he considered his sources, his homeland, the Africa from which his ancestors had been carried centuries before. Yet U Tam'si, closer to Senghor in situation, has evidently been more influenced by the anger and techniques of Césaire. To understand the poetry of U Tam'si one must take into account not only twentieth century French poetry, not only his educational and personal history, but the traditions of "negro-african" poetry. Tribal life has not had a strong impact on U Tam'si, except perhaps as a lost ideal, for he spent a large part of his youth in France, where his father had gone as deputy for Moyen Congo. Although he believes that the influence of traditional African culture is desirable, he acknowledges only the influence of black American, not traditional literatures.² This, again, does not mean that U Tam'si's work is completely European: in fact the "message" of his poetry is rejection of Europe, a rejection which has its roots and explanation not only in the political and economic problems of Africa, but also

TCHICAYA U TAM'SI

Mettez un couteau face à mon destin
que le trame de l'ancien destin s'y coupe le fil

Je veux être libre de mon destin
Epitomé

Tchicaya U Tam'si was born in 1931 in what has become the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), although he feels ties to the Congo on the other side of the river. He is a member of the second generation of black francophone poets. More than twenty years separate his birth and poetic maturity from those of Senghor and others in the first wave of black poetry. Accordingly, he did not undergo the same Parisian prise de conscience as the members of the Ecrivain noir group. Rather, he looks back to those poets as predecessors, predecessors with whom he is in basic though not complete agreement. Since the revolt against the West which marks the works of that first generation is still relevant to U Tam'si, he has not needed so much to rebel against them as to alter their principles to his own situation.

Actually the largest part of that first wave were not African, although they felt allegiance to Africa. Césaire, Damas, and many

interpretations than if it is English. If he makes a conscious effort to return to "his sources," these sources will frequently be the intellectual ideals he has learned, not the tribal life he once knew. Throughout this thesis reified tradition, a body of abstractions treated as if concrete (although it is not the concrete tribal experience), refers to this intellectual sense of the past.

As has been suggested, this reified tradition is not greatly different from the tradition behind any poet, of any culture. It is necessary to distinguish between the mode and techniques of oral and modern African literature, but the process by which the latter and Western literature receive influences is the same. Furthermore, the concept of reified tradition does not nullify the efforts of African writers to separate themselves from Western ones, for their own literary tradition adds another dimension to their works. One is free, finally, to deal with the touchy topic of Negritude and the anglophone opposition to it as what it is: a cultural belief which has shaped literary works. The proper task of the critic is not to determine whether Negritude is true, any more than to determine whether Romanticism was right. The task is to plumb the meaning and discover the influences of these beliefs which are as much literary creations themselves as inspiration and cause of any specific work of literature.

the same, although they may be in geographical proximity. On the whole, African poets exhibit what must be called a Western attitude towards existence, for it is increasingly individualized and empirical. These Western attitudes can even be differentiated along linguistic lines: those who endured French colonialism have much in common with French culture; those who endured English colonialism have much in common with English culture.

This does not mean that an African of French expression thinks exactly like a Frenchman. In the same way that Frenchmen have constructed a sense of their history, composed partially of facts and partially of myths, Africans have evolved a unique sense of their own history. But they tell a different story: one of centuries of oppression culminating in the liberation now in progress. In the same way that a Western poet's work refers to his sense of historical tradition, an African poet is marked by his "past," his intellectual reconstruction of it. Finally, in the same way that a Western poet has been schooled in his literary tradition, will have been taught the proper interpretations of his past, an African poet has been schooled in an African literary tradition, a formal and intellectual body of notions about what tribal poetry was like, and how he must write to fulfill that tradition. Even if the poet has had direct contact with tribal poetry, this new "tradition" will remain and perhaps supplant the old. If the poet's second language is French, he will have a different set of

There is instead another, less direct process by which these African influences shape a poet's work. This process is not unlike that by which any poet acquires and expounds a sense of his literary tradition.

Contrary to the romantic beliefs of some critics, modern African poets live in a modern world. They may have been born in a tribal situation (although this is not always true either), but all of them receive a Western education and move outside of a purely tribal situation. Modern African poetry deals with the realities of this situation, not with those of tribal existence. There are certainly pockets of the past throughout Africa, and a modern poet may be living in intimate contact with them. But the concrete experience of modern Africa is of a society which has been wrenched out of communal existence and forced into an individualized one by the political and economic exploitation of Europe. Whatever traditional life may have been, it is no longer. And this fact, treated nostalgically or bitterly, is one of the major themes of African literature.

Parallel to this concrete sociological situation is an intellectual one. Although African societies had highly developed and complex thought systems, the remnants of these systems are hard to delineate. Many critics and politicians confused the valid results of ethnology, which has usually studied traditional cultures, for commentary on the culture of a modern, urbanized African. The two cultures are not

not only national frontiers but continental boundaries, one must be careful when speaking of any "tradition" of literature. Compared to the oral and formulaic tribal tradition of Africa, any written work is already firmly within the Western tradition. This is not as obvious, to some, as it appears; but neither is it a profound insight. The real act of criticism does not come until one ascertains which aspects of Western literature modern African poets have selected. The word "selected" has been deliberately chosen, for one way to avoid facile and false use of the concept of influence is to treat the poets as active selectors, rather than passive receivers, of a few of a vast array of models. Boileau and Breton belong to the same literary tradition.

The problem is compounded when one turns to the African literary tradition. Properly speaking, the tradition of any poet is the anonymous and popular poetry of his own tribe. Although all West African poetry is, in the main, similar, a poet's direct contact with it is limited to his own tribe's, and the exact contents of any given tribe's poetry are constantly changing and unrecorded. It is a safe hunch that something of this oral literature has lingered in the mind of a modern poet and emerged in his works. But this traditional poetry has had to pass through two filters, the first being the difference between an oral, communal poetry and a literary one, the second being the years of Western education the poet has absorbed. So to all intents and purposes, these kinds of influences are hard to detect.

himself striding from one footfall of staggering assertion and unproven premise to another. Rarely does any critic pause long enough in his polemic to speak of the works themselves; rarely are the systems and philosophies based on poems and plays. The latter are more often grist for the critic's mill.

This thesis analyzes a problem at the crux of the above disputes: what are the traditions behind, and the changes effected upon these traditions by, two modern African poets, Tchicaya U Tam'si and Christopher Okigbo? The former is of French and the latter of English expression, and they are, if not always "typical" of other African poets, at least among the best which the continent has produced in the past two decades. This analysis should thus have implications for all African writers. Yet since these implications will touch upon the forementioned polemics, are likely to become entangled in them, and since they will built upon that suspicious concept, "literary influence," there are several points which must be cleared up in the beginning.

There is an abundant literature on the nature of literary influence. If not conceived heavy-handedly, it is a valuable tool. There is a "danger of regarding the influences as more essential than that intangibility which is influenced". There is "peril in shaping the artistic unity of an irregular sequence to the conformity of a conveniently defined tradition".¹ Especially in the present study, which crosses

INTRODUCTION

Criticism of African literature faces a single and pervasive problem: its critics frequently have vested and extra-literary interests. On the one hand there are those who must prove, for varied personal and political reasons, that African literature is a direct continuation of tribal culture, that it expresses the collective "soul" of a particular race; there are those who, while not belonging to this race, have adopted it and its literature and, as if mounted on one of Sterne's hobby horses, ride out to elaborate theories of racial consciousness. On the other hand there are those who deny any originality to African literature, who relegate it to the realm of the marginal and the eccentric. Ironically, it has lately been the white European critics who, in an excess of patronizing good will, have bent over backwards and praised what is without value; whereas African, especially Nigerian, critics have attempted to establish, in the face of this fad for anything non-European, intelligent standards and judgements of their own literatures.

The aspiring critic who peruses the criticism of the field finds

in the poetic traditions of Césaire and Damas, those of negro-african poetry. Furthermore, this does not mean that the ideals of traditional Africa are not his ideals. The reconstruction of a tradition destroyed by colonialism is one of the concerns of negro-african writers. The proper distinction is that U Tam'si has not borrowed directly from traditional Africa, that he and his poetry are within a modern tradition.

The colonial policy of assimilation has had much to do with forming the intellectual climate of francophone Africa.³ The intention of this policy, which was sharply different from the British one, was to make Africa a part of France and, after an uncertain and perhaps hypothetical period of evolution and Gallicization, to admit Africans as fully franchised Frenchmen. Evolution, of course, was defined as Gallicization. To this end France established a system of colonial administration which contravened tribal loyalties and required the use of French at all times. By the mid-thirties the first assimilés (évolués) began reaching French universities. To those who qualified, and by qualification was meant a total acceptance of French values, language, and life-style, life as a Frenchman, with the implied rights, was almost possible.⁴ Senghor, the first black agrégé, is the example of what was possible.

But the system did not work as intended, and may not have been intended to work. Only a small number of Africans could assimilate

as much as Senghor, and the price this elite had to pay was great: in exchange for some privileges of French citizenship (these privileges were only partial because racial prejudice is as much a part of French culture as of any other), the elite had to abandon all ties with Africa, all loyalties to it.

The result of this system was the virulent rejection of the West begun in Paris in the thirties by young, black intellectuals, West Indian as well as African, and culminating in the political independence of French West and Equatorial Africa. The intellectual and cultural mainstay of the revolt was the doctrine of Negritude, formed by Césaire and Senghor and nourished by the adherents of the journal, Présence Africaine. Negritude attempted to establish a self-conscious respect for Africa, a love for the "cultural patrimony, the values, and above all the spirit of negro-african civilization," as Senghor defined Negritude.⁵ The Negritude movement, the principles of which were applied to politics as to literature, to history as to anthropology, began to replace the French values which the black elite had absorbed.⁶ Negritude depended upon certain developments in contemporary culture, but it has evolved its own canons and is outside of the mainstream of French culture. Césaire, who is frequently anthologized with metropolitan French poets, was influenced by Surrealism, but his "surrealist" poetry is different from that of any white Frenchman's.

U Tam'si matured in this intellectual ambience. Taken to France as an adolescent, he suffered the privation of exile and responded with contempt for the West, as did the first generation of black poets. The ideals of Negritude filled the void left by the loss of tribal values and his rejection of Western ones. Although he has tempered his definition of Negritude to make it less exclusive ("The fruits of Negritude should not be picked by black hands alone, but also by the hands of men of goodwill throughout the world."⁷), his rejection of official Europe remains total. The Congo crisis of the early sixties marked him deeply and inspired his volume Epitomé. The bitterness caused by those events, and his concomitant poetic meditation on the misdeeds of Europe, have made him a poet to whom Europe is anathema. If he writes in an European mode, he is nevertheless intent upon creating a new African poetry.

U Tam'si's readers encounter two problems deriving from the nature of his poetry. The first is that he expresses himself in terms of hermetic symbols. The second is that the significance of these symbols is built up over the course of all his poetry. His work is a variation on themes, on phrases. It is laced with echoes of itself, with slight modifications of what he has already posited. In the end the meaning of any phrase depends upon its position and use within the entire book, or even oeuvre:

It is difficult to do justice to U Tam'si without quoting at

considerable length and from many different points in his work. Each of his books is unified by the constant re-working and exploration of a fairly fixed vocabulary of images which he continually places in new relations to each other. 8

Any image must be seen in its total context. For example, "feu de brousse," the title of the first important volume and, generally speaking, a symbol for the destruction of his homeland and the poetic forces raging within him, turns up in his later books in a different form: "Les feux de brousse surtout donnent de mauvais rêves" (Ep. 38); "ma tristesse est trop sale / pour être un feu de brousse" (Ep. 63); "Faites que le sang m'inonde / mieux que les feux de brousse" (Ven. 36). The new context of the phrase represents, if one is aware of the earlier one, a step of development, a fresh attitude.

Unfortunately, many of the images transformed by repetition into symbols are obscure and irreducible. U Tam'si's language is foreign until one has taken the time to learn its vocabulary.⁹ For the moment an example of this difficulty will suffice. The "ventre," title of his penultimate volume of verse, remains at best an unclear symbol. At one point the belly seems to strangle the poet: "J'étouffe sous un ventre / qui n'a pas su dire pardon..." (Ven. 16). At another, the belly offers protection: "...nous partîmes à la recherche d'un ventre commun / nous préservant de la fosse commune!" (Ven. 36).

There is one last difficulty. Unlike many African poets, U Tam'si is not as interested in "content" as in "form".¹⁰ He is not didactic

in the sense that he has a message to convey. Notwithstanding the African poets who do write stylistically intricate poetry, the usual emphasis is upon communication. There are specific political and cultural doctrines to promulgate. U Tam'si considers himself as committed as the next writer, but does not allow this commitment to simplify his convolute poetic vision. He is a witness to his own turmoil, and would subscribe to Senghor's definition of poetry in the introduction to Epitomé: "La poésie ne vise pas à l'efficacité: elle est, par quoi elle est efficace, qui arrache l'âme et la retourne".¹¹

The aim of U Tam'si's poetry is total emancipation, and therein he is a good proponent of Negritude and Surrealism. The brunt of his revolt is against the West, but he is conscious of other repressive forces, reason itself, the platitudes (as opposed to valid tenets) of Negritude, his own inertia. The historical situation in which the poet finds himself is a tragic one. Almost four hundred years of slave trade, an intensive period of colonialism, and its ensuing economic and political imperialism have been inflicted upon his people. The dilemma of any African or black poet is to release himself from the bonds of this external and internal domination, without falling into the error of another, equally narrow, racism.

The first step is to define the effects of those four hundred years. In U Tam'si's poetry, references to the slave trade and to contemporary prejudice abound.

La mer obéissait déjà aux seuls négriers
des nègres s'y laissaient prendre
malgré les sortilèges de leurs sourires (Ep. 38)

And:

Moi qui ne sais rien
de l'arbre de ma vie
mon scandale avait trois couleurs (Ep. 40)

The three colours, one learns from passages in the same poem, are the blue, white, and red of the French flag. The result of this scandal is that he does not know his genealogy, his family tree, the "arbre" which occurs throughout the poems in different shapes and forms. The crippling impact of racial prejudice, the way it can stifle creativity, is depicted:

Il venait de livrer le secret du soleil
et voulut écrire le poème de sa vie...

il avait l'âme mûre
quand quelqu'un lui cria
sale tête de nègre (FB. 56)

The response of the African is the "acte suave de son rire" (FB. 56), or cries of anguish against the "remorqueurs de coton français" (FB. 58), an interesting echo of Rimbaud's "porteur de blés flamands ou de cotons anglais" ("le Bateau ivre," line 6).

The colonizers brought Christ with them and the poet's reaction ranges from condemnation of Christ as a sell-out in the service of the exploiters to blasphemy:

Que tu es sale Christ d'être avec les bourgeois (Ep. 62)

or:

ceux qui sont venus
 avaient sous leurs narines
 la croix et la bannière
 où l'on vit le christ
 accroupi et somnolent
 sur les flammes du purgatoire
 et j'oublie, un vomitif
 dans les calices, dans chaque main!
 vous êtes venus:
 Etes-vous sûrs d'avoir vaincu (Ven. 13)

This view of Europe is natural because its influence, much of it
 noxious, has been great upon Africa: " [L'Europe] menace, corrompt,
 divise, empêche l'épanouissement de l'Afrique".¹²

There is also contempt for those Africans who have cooperated
 with this colonial process or, by remaining indifferent, have condemned
 their fellows to more of the same:

Ah quel continent n'a pas ses faux nègres
 j'en ai à vendre
 Même l'Afrique a aussi les siens
 Le Congo a ses faux nègres (Ep. 65)

A "vrai nègre," it is implied, is one who does not, with mere "sorti-
 lèges de sourires," submit to the colonial process. The "vrai nègre"
 is he who asserts himself and his freedom.

But this self-assertion is a complicated process. Just as the
 first black writers felt it necessary to return to their sources, U Tam'si
 is searching for his. The poet must discover the roots of his tree,
 his genealogy: "je retourne aux trous de ma mémoire / je retrouve
 mon enfance nue" (FB. 92). This is difficult because the recent

exploitation of Africa, and its rapid detribalization under the pressure of Europe, have obscured these roots. The poet reacts with bitter nostalgia:

et j'ai crié
par-dessus les jungles
est la droiture du chemin oublié (FB. 54)

The search is an ontological one for, bereft of his traditional culture, the African no longer has a sure sense of himself:

je ne sus plus l'essence de mon âme
pour ouvrir cette porte-là
comme l'eussent fait les pères de mes mânes (Ep. 40)

This is the starting point for the poet, and his race. Their heritage has been destroyed and replaced, if at all, by an alien culture. They are victims of an economic system and system of thought which denies them their humanity and their "essence".

The response of the African elite has been Negritude, the doctrine which proclaims the original genius of African tradition. The political response of Africa has culminated in the wave of national liberations beginning in the late fifties and continuing at present in the struggles in South Africa. U Tan'si's response, as a poet, has been his poetry. With a method parallel to Surrealism and based, in theory, upon traditional African philosophy, he achieves freedom by naming his afflictions and evoking images of the freedom which becomes his in the act of naming.

The poet's passion, and Senghor insists that the etymological

sense of the word is proper here, is portrayed on many levels. U Tam'si locates the source of his being in the river which flows through him, a river which is at once his race, the vitality of life which is his and his people's, and the Congo river of which he is so enamoured:

ce fleuve qui m'habite me repeuple
autour du feu vous ai-je seulement dit
ma race
il coule ici et là un fleuve
les flammes sont le regard
de ceux qui le couvent (FB. 59)

The "feu de brousse," which gives title to U Tam'si's second volume of poetry, represents the destruction of the countryside through which the Congo river flows, and the intensity and anger of those who reflect upon the significance of the river. This meditation is a crucifixion, for the poet is standing as a witness to his people's suffering, taking it upon himself:

et pourtant
quelque chose en moi
porte dans les ronces du désir
une couronne de cuivre humide
du sang d'un martyr (Ven. 15)

The act of crucifixion is associated with other motifs, the stripping bare, the identification of poet and tree (Tchicaya U Tam'si means "petite feuille qui parle de son pays"):

le coeur
dont le mystère à peine élucidé
me déshabille m'écorce me crucifie
au sommaire de ma passion (Ep. 36)

The poet's passion is deliberately and skilfully associated with Christ's, especially in the section of Epitomé entitled "le Contempteur". But

U Tam'si's relationship with Christ is ambiguous. On the one hand he recognizes the similarity of their martyrdom:

O mon doux Christ
Epine pour épine
nous avons commune couronne d'épines (Ep. 61)

For Christ too is a victim of the European bourgeoisie; the spirit of his religion has been violated by materialism. On the other hand Christ is still an emblem of the West and U Tam'si cannot bring himself to accept a figure so much a part of the exploitation of Africa. The passion of the poet, expressed in numerous permutations of imagery, in fire, in water, in blood, reaches two contradictory but inter-related conclusions. The first is gratuitous, apocalyptic violence.

J'ordonne violez ces folles
et sur le disque de la lune
offrez-moi leur triste folie
je suis et vis du nouvel âge (Ep. 66)

The second is forgiveness, a quest for peace.

Assez de scandale sur ma vie
Je ne verrai plus mon sang sur leurs mains
J'oublie d'être nègre pour pardonner cela au monde
C'est dit qu'on me laisse la paix d'être Congolais (Ep. 57)

The two moods are interrelated because liberation requires at once the destruction of the old, a severing of ties with the past:

Mettez un couteau face à mon destin
que le trame de l'ancien destin s'y coupe le fil

Je veux être libre de mon destin (Ep. 59)

And liberation requires a self-purification which entails a radical reorientation of one's own habits of thought and sense of self:

Et maintenant le plus terrible reste à faire
 aller jusqu'au fond du chemin
 connaître l'ombre par abstraction de moi-même
 être le ver dans chaque fruit finissant
 servir de plancton à l'histoire (Ep. 70)

He who surmounts his destiny transcends good and evil, is willing to be the worm which rots the apparently healthy. He offers himself up to history. In the end the poet achieves an almost religious and ceremonial peace:

Ne tardez pas
 je peux être utile
 j'ai déjà refait mes ongles
 rasé ma tête
 je suis propre devant la nuit (Ep. 78)

U Tam'si's poetic suffering is self-conscious and willed. The political and cultural cause of his suffering is Europe. He must break out of the confines of Western reason. Liberation in the political kingdom is valid only if accompanied by liberation in the psychological state.

Although there is an equivalent tradition of psychological liberation in European literature, one reaching back to Rimbaud's "dérèglement" and culminating in the surrealist poetry of the twenties, U Tam'si's sources are within Africa, or at least the black world. He has absorbed and altered Negritude, especially that Negritude which found poetic form in the works of Césaire. There is no ques-

tion that this doctrine owes something to Surrealism,¹³ but there is equally no doubt that U Tam'si looks back not to the surrealists of Europe, but to a single figure, a poet who has been called the greatest of all surrealists, Césaire.¹⁴ There is an excellent reason for this influence: Césaire's work, his particular genius, was directed towards not only his personal liberation, but the liberation of his race. No black poet can ignore his colour; if he develops, as U Tam'si has, to the point where he is suspicious of easy dichotomies of black and white, he must at least begin by recognizing what his colour means in the world at large. Negritude, especially Césaire's brand (and it is naive to assume that Negritude was a monolithic movement), is the tradition against which U Tam'si must be measured.

Césaire's poetic expression of Negritude has two sides. The first is his forceful and coruscating style. In Cahier d'un retour au pays natal this style is close to Rimbaud's in Une saison en enfer. Indeed, the two works share other qualities, the personal tone of confession, the leaps of imagery, the intense emotions. Césaire's style, his torrent of images, is the very incarnation of the surrealist ideal. These are poems over which one must work for hours.

Un style qui... utilise à outrance des symboles très personnels et bien subtils à élucider: chaque vers de Césaire contient ainsi une image ou une série d'images qui ont une signification très précise. Et si l'on n'arrive pas à découvrir le sens de ces images, le poème reste clos. 15

The second side of his poetry is its themes. Césaire's poetry was the first forceful expression of the black man's dilemma. The Cahier, which portrays the deliberate engagement of the poet with his people and envisions a subsequent collective and personal liberation, has established the basic motifs of black poetry. Rather than avoiding identification with blacks, Césaire embraces them and, self-proclaimed spokesman for all, but especially for his native West Indies, leads them to salvation:

J'accepte...j'accepte...entièrement, sans réserve...
ma race qu'aucune ablution d'hysope et de lys mêlés
ne pourrait purifier (Cahier 112)

This liberation entails a frank rejection of Western reason and values,

Que 2 et 2 font 5
que la forêt miaule
que l'arbre tire les marrons du feu
que le ciel lisse la barbe
et caetera et caetera... (Cahier 54),

and more precise finger-pointing,

Et la voix prononce que l'Europe nous a pendant
les siècles gavés de mensonges et gonflés de
pestilences... (Cahier 124).

The result of this surge of self-assertion is freedom to return to a state presumed that of pre-colonial and pre-slave trade Africa. This is as much an ontological or mystic state as a political one.

Je retrouverais le secret des grandes communications
et grandes combustions. Je dirais orage. Je dirais
fleuve. Je dirais tornade. Je dirais feuille. Je
dirais arbre. (Cahier 38)

Cesaire's poetry is a coherent expression of the surrealist ideal: words make things happen, poetry reveals a truth beyond reason. But this theory also parallels certain notions of the role of language in tribal Africa. The result has been that Cesaire and other black poets who pursued the same goals have been proclaimed the true survivors of the tribal tradition. In actual fact, Cesaire owes much to the surrealists. He was in Paris in the thirties and, while collaborating with Senghor and others in the formation of Negritude, was in contact with the European avant-garde. What happened was that Surrealism, with its rejection of reason and its drive for liberation, helped Cesaire formulate his ideas:

The surrealist revolution, by breaking down the conventional forms of French poetry, gave to Cesaire a ready tool for providing an individual accent to his poetic expression, for restoring within the literary tradition of an imposed culture, "the upright majesty of his original eye". 16

Although Cesaire was not an African, his poetry, his deliberate association with the black race, his rejection of Europe, and the poetic freedom which he attained by these acts, are representative of Negritude. Senghor may provide the theory behind literary Negritude, but his poetry derives too much from his own personality and mixed heritage (he is truly an assimilé, a professor of Classics in France before the war) to have the impact of Cesaire's.

U Tam'si's variation upon Negritude, the differences between Cesaire and him, are revealing. By the time that U Tam'si began

writing the bulk of his work, African political independence was assured. It was clear, furthermore, that the white man was not solely responsible for the condition of Africa. Black had turned against black in the Congo. A respected tradition of African literature had developed (one cannot be more respected and respectable than Senghor who, as African and Frenchman, had held important political posts and received accolades from all sides). A poet was no longer able to count upon his uniqueness as an African to sustain his work. A poet coming into his own in the fifties had a different perspective than one doing so in the thirties.

Gerald Moore had distinguished U Tam'si's from Césaire's style in the following terms: the latter's is "an onward rush, "while the former's is "the more inward, spiral, exploratory".¹⁷ This sums up one aspect of the difference between them. U Tam'si is introspective, less expansive than Césaire. His poems are more "studied". Each is connected to another, each, because of the imagery which unifies his works, refers to another.

But there are other differences. One can imagine U Tam'si's pleasure in encountering the following passage of Césaire:

A force de regarder les arbres je suis
devenu un arbre et mes longs pieds
d'arbre ont creusé dans le sol de larges
sacs à venin de hautes villes d'ossements
à force de penser au Congo
je suis devenu un Congo bruissant de
forêts et de fleuves (Cahier 56)

But U Tam'si is not a mere imitator of Cesairian themes. Only in his early work, especially Feu de brousse, does he exhibit a total identification of poet and race. By Epitomé (1961), his identification was blurred: "j'oublie d'être nègre pour pardonner cela au monde..." (54). This change has some historical reason: the Congo crisis, though precipitated by Belgian colonialism and confused by the ambiguous role of the United Nations, was a conflict of black and black. Within his poetry, furthermore, U Tam'si had come to the conclusion that the kind of liberation necessary was not only political and collective, but personal. The doctrine of Negritude, appropriate to the struggles of an earlier generation, was in danger of becoming another shackle.

By masquerading under assumed "suffixes" [the "tude"] the Negro finally gives importance only to what is contingent-- that is, the surface of things. He imprisons himself in the jail of a narrow world, which leads nowhere. And the great poetic revolution consists precisely of breaking the yokes, of freeing oneself of assumed ancestorship, and of proclaiming oneself the son of the universe. Tchicaya U Tam'si starts his Epitomé by repudiating his assumed family tree. 18

In a sense, Césaire's poetry and message was a stopgap, a phase. It was contingent upon Césaire's time and place. Once it had achieved its purpose, others had to surpass it.

This does not mean that U Tam'si is "softer" on the West. The poet must break all yokes. His breaking with Negritude does not obviate his rupture with the West. Nor, as the violence of his

poetry attests, does it make his agony any the easier. U Tam'si's revolt is still akin to Césaire's; his ultimate aim the same: the total emancipation of man.

If one is going to place U Tam'si within a tradition, this tradition is decidedly that of Negritude, or, more distantly and through Césaire, Surrealism. Traditional Africa, from all that one has seen so far, does not effect his poetry. If anything, U Tam'si rejects it: "je suis et vis du nouvel âge". At the most he wants to reclaim the freedom and purity of traditional Africa, not the age itself. Nevertheless, Negritude writers draw numerous theoretical relationships between themselves and that lost Africa. U Tam'si, and many of his critics, participates in these myths.

The central premise of Negritude is that there is a link between the psychology, the culture, and, eventually, the role of poetry in tribal and modern African society. Whether or not these links actually exist has not been proven by anthropology, although there are many illuminating studies on the essentials of tribal society. What is important is that these links are asserted, that the proponents of Negritude have assumed that their urbanized, individualized culture continues the values of the culture of their fathers. "Si l'on veut nous chercher des maîtres, il serait plus sage de les chercher du côté de l'Afrique."¹⁹ This is a premise plausible to anyone who has

lived there, for modern Africa is obviously a mixture of old and new. The two cultures, the tribal and the urban, live elbow to elbow.

In literature, the values and devices of the traditional African poet, who was often anonymous, are presumed to carry over into the present. These qualities can be classified in two categories: there is a uniquely "African" use of language; there is an uniquely "African" use of poetry and art in general.

Apart from Senghor, the most comprehensive exponent of the influence upon and the continuation of tribal culture in modern poets is Janheinz Jahn, whose Muntu is an analysis of the "Neo-African philosophy" he claims has survived not only in modern Africa, but also among the black people of the Americas. His book, which has been followed by an history of "Neo-African literature," and a lengthy bibliography, is a synthesis of several anthropologists: Placide Tempels, author of Bantoe-Filosophie, Marcel Griaule, author of Dieu d'eau, and Germaine Dieterlen, author of Essay on Bambara Religion, among others. The premise of Jahn's synthetic philosophy is that African culture distinguishes itself from others in the world by its "humanism". Man, "muntu," is the center of the universe. Man, using the proper rituals (and these rituals require the proper use of the Word), attributes value and function to objects.

According to African philosophy man has, by the force of

his word, dominion over "things"; he can change them, make them work for him, and command them. But to command things with words is to practice "magic". And to practice magic is to write poetry-- that holds true not only for Africa. 20

This Word is the "parole africaine," the especially African use of language. Jahn's version of recent events in Africa is that, after the long period of disruption caused by Western imperialism, African culture is reviving in the form of Neo-African culture. And this culture identifies itself by its emphasis upon emotion, as opposed to analytic reason; upon man, as opposed to objects; upon Africa, as opposed to Europe. Negritude is an attitude, "the practical application of the extremely obvious knowledge that every artist achieves his best work when he attaches himself to his own tradition". 21

Negritude, in other words, is the literary movement which signals a self-conscious return to an African, a Neo-African, culture. It should be clear that Jahn's system is one form of the reified tradition. It places a modern African writer in a tradition which extends back for millennia, and which is conveniently defined in Jahn's book.

Senghor too has elaborated theories of African culture. His approaches to the topic range from political polemic ("On African Socialism"), to his own contemplative poetry, from literary criticism ("De la poésie bantoue à la poésie négro-africaine"), to phenomenological sociology ("l'Esprit de la civilisation ou les lois de la culture négro-africaine"). The last of these works propounds the

essential myths of the African mentality.

On l'a dit souvent, le Nègre est l'homme de la nature. Il vit traditionnellement de la terre et avec la terre, et dans et par le cosmos. C'est un sensuel, un être aux sense ouverts, sans intermédiaires entre le sujet et l'objet, sujet et objet à la fois. Il est d'abord sons, odeurs, rythmes, forme et couleurs. 22

The implications of this statement, and it is by no means isolated, are twofold: the black race has a different phenomenology, a different mode of existence, than other races; this mode of existence is beyond the immediate influence of culture for it remains in those who have been assimilated, even in those who have lived and studied for large parts of their lives in Europe. The crux of the argument is that race creates consciousness, that mentalities (and in this case the mentality is one propitious to creation of all sorts) are inherited in the same way pigmentation is. This is clearly a racial response to the well established European racialism which assumed that the white man alone possessed reason and civilization. But the fact that it is a response to a prior racial conception of man, does not make it any the less so itself.

When this conception of Negritude is applied to U Tam'si, as Senghor does in his introduction to Epitomé, the results verge on the absurd.

Tchicaya est un Bantou du Congo. . . . Je dis: un bantou. C'est ce caractère qui définit, d'abord, Tchicaya et sa poésie. La poésie des Bantous est une des plus authentiquement négro-africaines. Elle est pure, du moins au Congo, de toute influence arabo-berbère. Et si elle ne l'est pas tout à fait de l'influence pygmée or khoisan,

c'est tant mieux, car les nègres marginaux de l'Afrique centrale et australe sont les plus près des sources. 23

It is as if the soil of northern Angola were radioactive in an especially beneficent way, and those born near to this radiating source of pure Negritude have been mutated, restored to pure perspicacity. The irony is that the khoisan peoples ("the bushmen") whom Senghor mentioned were originally the dominant culture of southern Africa and were conquered and exploited by this Bantu race; that the peoples of northern and western Africa, including some of the most creative and "authentically African," have been islamized for so long (and Islam has older roots in Africa than Senghor's own Catholicism) that one cannot separate the indigenous from the Arab elements in their culture. Senghor's error is that in speaking in such general terms, without any attempt to clarify the concrete qualities of Bantu poetry, and in presuming that race, rather than culture, is the determining factor of mentality, he sanctions and nourishes certain myths which are the very kind U Tam'si wishes to dispense with.

Returning to the "African" use of language, these assumptions lead to the further assumption that U Tam'si's style is particularly African:

La poésie de Tchicaya a donc gardé les vertus de la poésie négro-africaine la plus authentique. Et d'abord cette syntaxe de juxtaposition qui fait sauter les gonds de la logique. Une syntaxe qui déraisonne. 24

Although some tribal poetry is hermetic, the claim that "une syntaxe qui déraisonne" is uniquely African is an unfounded one, especially when one takes into consideration European poetry of the past century. There is no doubt that Negritude is, on the whole, a poetry "qui déraisonne". Césaire is not the only Negritude poet whose language is anti-rational. But tribal African poetry, or even Bantu poetry, is too large and unknown a field for any judgements about it to be valid. The single connection between U Tam'si and another that can be substantiated is the one between him and the Césaire of Cahier. And if Negritude is not the source and background of U Tam'si, then one must turn, not to a Bantu tradition, but to European Surrealism.

There has been much discussion about the relationship between Surrealism and the poetic principles of Negritude, much of it inspired by the desire, on the part of the Negritude poets, to disassociate themselves from European influence. If one can prove that the esthetic of Negritude derives from a contemporary European literary movement, then much of its claim that it is a revival of African culture becomes suspect.

The historical facts indicate that there were many connections between the two movements. The movement around the review Légitime Défense, a forerunner of L'Etudiant Noir and Negritude as a whole, adopted Surrealism as a means of achieving liberation

from Europe itself.

Légitime Défense held that it would be only by the radical surrealist use of the language that these age-old associations could be shattered and the way prepared for the expression of the African psyche in its integrity, uncensored by the shadow of Europe. 25

Kesteloot has delineated the ties between Surrealism and the later Negritude movement, even up to the forties when Breton adopted Césaire as the ideal surrealist. Significantly, Césaire encountered the dilemmas of the surrealists when he joined the communist party. U Tam'si himself acknowledges some similarity in one of his poems.

Qu'ai-je à faire de mille étoiles en plein jour
le rapt surréaliste
de l'une d'elles
eût sacré ma raison folle (Ep. 41)

The real issue is not whether Negritude, at least the side of it which sought liberation from Western rationalism, had some roots in Surrealism, but whether any differences developed. It appears that there were some such differences.

In the first place, the poets of Negritude rejected not mere rationalism, but Western culture as a whole.

Plus que le carcan étriqué du rationalisme, que l'appauvrissement d'un art embourgeoisé, que l'avilissement d'un régime politique et économique, c'est une civilisation entière que leur refus englobera, une race entière, parce que ses sages, ses philosophes et ses religions ont permis les marchés d'esclaves et la colonisation. A la différence des surréalistes français, ce ne sont pas les structures de leur propre esprit et de leur propre

société qu'ils combattront, mais des structures étrangères et un ordre hai, parce que conquérant et oppresseur. 26

This distinction still applies to U Tam'si. In a sense, African poets can be more Catholic than the Pope, more surreal than the surrealists.

In the second place, it is frequently difficult to attribute precise influences of style to the surrealists, for the black poets range in style from the abrupt dislocations of Césaire and U Tam'si, the controlled hatred of Damas, to the melodic and swaying chants of Senghor. The spirit of Surrealism, more than any specific doctrine or technique, acted as a catalyst for Negritude.

It is as though what was sought was the liberating effect of the surrealist outlook on man and art, its permissiveness in admitting freeplay of association, its dethroning of rules and premoulded language patterns. 27

Once the possibility of such a total rejection of traditions (although Surrealism was not such a rejection, but had been well prepared by the Romanticism and Symbolism of the nineteenth century) was suggested, the route to Negritude was open.

The problem of the theoreticians of Negritude then became, how to distinguish themselves from Surrealism. Fortunately, the ethnological studies which proliferated at that time provided parallels between traditional African culture and the surrealist esthetic, the "magic" use of language. The West (and this is exemplified

by the cubist "discovery of primitive art") had stumbled into a position supposedly similar to African art at the same time the Africans were looking for a way back to their sources.

Nous acceptions le Surréalisme comme un moyen mais non comme une fin, comme un allié et non comme un maître. Nous voulions bien nous inspirer du Surréalisme, mais uniquement parce que l'écriture surréaliste retrouvait la parole africaine. 28

And the similarities of the theoretical "parole africaine" and Surrealism were striking. The differences, enumerated by Kesteloot,²⁹ are less obvious. According to the theoreticians of Negritude, the African poet (and there is the same blurring of the distinction between the tradition and the modern as above) participates in a natural universe of forces, over which he has control by virtue of his power of the Word. Objects are without meaning until man attributes meaning to them. The world which the poet evokes is therefore not the Freudian subconscious of the surrealists, but the real and religious world around him.

La différence est claire: l'artiste africain tente d'appréhender un univers religieux, peuplé de forces objectives, extérieur à l'homme, tandis que le surréaliste européen ne révèle qu'un monde intérieur. 30

From this position it is possible to distinguish the "magic" Negritude of Césaire, which attempts to transform the external world, and the more "religious" Negritude of Senghor, which tries to align the poet with the forces of the external world.

An analogous contrast is proposed in Claire Cea's introduction to U Tam'si:

Dans la poésie occidentale, l'image précède le mot.
 Dans leurs expériences, les surréalistes métamorphosent des images données. Dans la poésie négro-africaine, le mot précède l'image, par le pouvoir du verbe....
 Le poète surréaliste se laisse investir par le verbe.
 L'inspiration sourd du fond de l'inconscient. Tandis que le poète négro-africain est maître du verbe. 31

This distinction too is based upon the concept of the progenitive Word, a notion derived from ethnology. The tribal doctor or poet has power over reality because he knows how to manipulate the right words. Presumably, the modern African poet has inherited the same powers.

One must keep in mind that these are the "literary myths" of Negritude, that there is no scientific reason to believe that what was true for the tribal African has remained so for the urban African. In fact, if one is dubious about the central premise of Negritude, that tribal cultural values have carried over into the poetry of assimilés, these contrasts make little sense.

Gerald Moore's article, "Surrealism and Negritude in the Poetry of Tchicaya U Tam'si," takes a more moderate approach; one which grants the impact of the tenets of Negritude, but insists upon the similarity of the two movements. The language and style of Surrealisme sought the same ends as U Tam'si's poetry: "une syntaxe qui déraisonne"; "une traduction des mouvements même du coeur,"

according to Senghor. And Aragon's definition of Surrealism would make a "good formula... for an African poetry of revolution and self-discovery": "Le Surréalisme n'est pas une forme poétique. Il est un cri de l'esprit qui retourne vers lui-même et est bien décidé à broyer désespérément ses entraves".³²

Now the classic definition of Surrealism is Breton's: "Automatisme psychique pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer... le fonctionnement de la pensée".³³ No one who has read U Tam'si would say that his poetry is automatic. There are too many carefully positioned repetitions for it to be so. But then automatic writing was only a phase of Surrealism, and many works still considered surrealist have obviously been rewritten and structured. This aspect of the surrealist doctrine was rather a suggestion of possibilities, a way to isolate what surrealists believed was the source of poetry and truth:

Le surréalisme repose sur la croyance à la réalité supérieure de certaines formes d'association négligées jusqu'à lui, à la toute puissance du rêve, au jeu désintéressé de la pensée. ³⁴

Questions of technique aside, this tenet is the common one among Surrealism, Negritude, and the poetry of U Tam'si. Whether the "superior reality" is inside or outside, psychological or religious, it revelation is the purported aim of the poetry of each. On the other hand, this premise is common to much of modern poetry.³⁵

The connection between Surrealism and Negritude, and U Tam'si's relationship to the two, therefore remains a matter of spiritual affinity, reinforced by the objective historical contacts Kesteloot has so meticulously detailed.

But many things, I believe, have helped to shape this [U Tam'si's] poetry: the inspiration of Césaire, and beyond him the technique and example of the surréalistes; the sculpture, music, and poetry of the Congo; and not least his own unique genius. There is surely no need to deny the part played by any of these.... 36

U Tam'si sprang out of Negritude, but that tradition of Negritude points back, in different ways, to two other traditions, that of Surrealism and that of tribal African poetry. And each shares an interest in the "magic" use of language.

The second quality of tribal poetry alleged to carry over into modern black poetry is the close relationship of the poet and his people. As befits a member of a cohesive communal society, the tribal poet expresses not his own sentiments, but those of the entire tribe. L'art pour l'art is unimaginable in such a context. Jahn relates this characteristic back to the nature of tribal society, that "things" are not important in themselves; they have value only insofar as man attributes value with the Word. Efficacy rather than pure esthetics is the single criterion of good art.

In African poetry, on the other hand, the expression

is always in the service of the content; it is never a question of expressing oneself, but of expressing something, and, indeed, with a view to the results, for African poetry exists as function. Nor is the African poet ever concerned with his inner nature, with his individuality. 37

Whenever a modern African poet allies himself with his race, as Césaire in Cahier, or U Tam'si in Feu de brousse, there is an apparent parallel with this principle of tribal poetry. The poet of Negritude who is engagé, whose poetry is the "expression both of a collective and of a personal drama,"³⁸ is in fact theoretically similar to the tribal poet. But there is a difference of cause, and thus an essential difference of effect, in this modern form of engagement. The tribal poet did not elect to speak for his people for, by the very nature of tribal life, he could not see himself apart from his community. That many tribal poets were anonymous or created in an oral, formulaic tradition, reinforces this distinction. The engagement of a Negritude poet is a willed, self-conscious, and often political alliance with a large body of people, separated in time and space and circumstance, who are united only insofar as they are of the same race, have darker rather than lighter skin, and have been victimized. Although it is true that this voluntary association with the "people" distinguishes the poetry of Negritude from the elitist tradition of the West, it does not automatically equate Césaire's poetry with tribal poetry.

In the case of U Tam'si, this distinction is greater in one sense, lesser in another. While he commenced his oeuvre with two volumes which exemplify the solidarity of poet and people, he moved away from this position to his current one in which liberation must transcend both race and racialism, any constricting a priori definition of the self. Especially limiting, in U Tam'si's view, is a purely political notion of engagement, a view which is also non-traditional.

Il faudrait parler le langage d'aujourd'hui pour découvrir sous-jacente à la notion d'engagement une conception purement politique de l'engagement. 39

The traditional and anonymous arts of Africa, U Tam'si states in his article, "Engagement et Tradition," were engagés neither in the political sense, nor in the esthetic sense of the modern Western poet. L'art pour l'art is no more acceptable than partisan engagement, for both deny the richness of life, create a closed system.

Engagement total, encore une fois... ne saurait être partisan, politique. Il est ouvert. La vie n'en peut proposer d'autre. L'engagement "partisan" ou "politique" crée d'ailleurs des frustrations, il permet de renverser des situations mais rarement de les juguler une fois pour toutes, pour triompher avec un maximum de générosité. 40

The traditional arts were totally and ethically involved in the life of the community, for politics, ethics, esthetics, and life within the tribe were coterminous. This sort of unity is no longer possi-

ble. But when one takes into account the fact that U Tam'si's art aims at the entirety of his being, rejects preconceived political and cultural doctrines, it does appear that he and the other "new voices of African poetry in French" analyzed by Melone,⁴¹ are closer to the traditional mode of engagement than first generation Negritude was. It is as if his poetry reunifies that which industrial society has fragmented.

The clearest link between U Tam'si and traditional African literature is not, however, his poetry. He has also edited a collection of African folklore and mythology, Légendes Africaines. This book, which contains fourteen tales assembled from various sources, anthropological studies, early African literature in printed form, interspersed with commentary which relates the material thematically, attempts to teach the central "lessons" of traditional culture. The assumption, on the whole valid, behind this book is that some of traditional culture can be retrieved by such a process.

Ce livre essaie de montrer qu'en remontant le chemin de la légende il est possible d'atteindre les sources pures et fraîches de la culture traditionnelle. 42

Although the concrete experience, and thus the living values, of traditional life are gone, an intellectual and imaginative effort can preserve its essence. Such a study is close to applied scho-

larship, and thus runs the risk of being as detached from everyday life as scholarship generally is. But the study could also provide "une plate-forme littéraire, si nécessaire au développement des belles-lettres en Afrique".⁴³ There is a gap between the oral, communal literature of tribal Africa and the printed, elitist literature of modern Africa, and most contemporary African writers are aware of this. But an interest in and use of transcribed traditional material could serve the same enriching function as Greek and Roman literature has served the West, for the latter literature is as dead and sociologically inappropriate to a modern European writer as traditional culture is to an African one.

The values of that lost culture which U Tam'si reclaims are those usually ascribed to Africa. Humour, bravery, craft, cunning, and wisdom are exemplified in different ways in each story. Without resorting to a view of the world in which good, black Africa is contrasted to evil, white Europe, U Tam'si asserts the wealth and dignity of the African tradition and, since this prose collection has an element of didacticism missing from his poetry, urges them upon those he hopes will read his work.

This act of identification with traditional culture is also an act of identification with a certain strain of Negritude which had preceded him. Kesteloot had predicted the growth of this tendency

at the close of her Ecrivains noirs, for it was clear that militant and manecheistic Negritude was at a dead end.

Le conte est au contraire dépourvu de tout engagement polémique. Il ne revendique pas, il ne vise nullement à opposer noirs et blancs, il décrit simplement la vie traditionnelle, le folklore, les coutumes et les mœurs, et c'est chez lui que nous trouvons les traces les plus authentiques de la vie nègre. 44

Birago Diop, Bernard Dadie, and Ousmane Soce had indicated the possibilities of this genre, practically a new genre. In the first place, the emphasis upon African culture in these stories is not dependent upon a revolt against the West, and thus, in a real sense, upon the West itself. As Kesteloot suggests, the engagement represented by these stories is non-political. It is intellectual and didactic, didactic insofar as the involvement the African elite has with its past will eventually filter down to the largely illiterate population of Africa, and reinforce its own involvement with Africa. These writers choose to be educators. Traditional values, those not determined by the economic and social forces of the Africa which is becoming, can be inseminated, can, through a process of conscious self-education, retain some of their former influence.

In the second place, this admixture of traditional culture will supply the literary platform U Tam'si referred to. This "retour aux sources" is not new; it was at the heart of the early Negritude movement. But Légendes Africaines, and similar works, are writ-

ten within a different context than the first efforts at Africanization. The situation is no longer so desperate. This Africanization is an affirmation rather than a negation: the movement is more towards Africa than from the West. And because the writers are frequently not simply transcribing, but altering and strengthening the stories, the conte is neither the Western short story, nor the anthropological compte-rendu of tribal ceremony. It differs from the former in structure, tempo, and insofar as it is unconcerned with "character development". Rather, it exemplifies values, much as traditional folktales did; it entertains, but not without conveying a message. If it speaks of heroes, it speaks of them as exemplary figures, not as the ambiguous and three-dimensional characters of the Western short story. Nor is the African conte anthropological: its main interest is literary, not scientific. Birago Diop pretends that he is merely writing down what a tribal griot has sung, but he is obviously carefully controlling his work. U Tam'si names and footnotes his sources; but he has arranged and commented upon the stories in such a way that they compose a whole which demonstrates the essence of African legend.

It appears, then, that prose instead of poetry is the best means of inserting this traditional material into African literature. Not one of U Tam'si's poems has been solely inspired by any facet of tradition. They arise from the conflicts and problems of his

contemporary life. Furthermore, the fact that U Tam'si has followed this one precedent of Negritude, does not imply his compliance with all of Negritude. His own supreme value is personal liberation, a value far outside of traditional culture.

I am opposed to all those false taboos which contain a man and hinder his self-expression. To free himself, man must know everything, be aware of everything, yes, love everything. 45

African legends are simply another part of the whole which man must know and love, a part with special import to an African, perhaps, but a part nonetheless.

U Tam'si's relationship with the various traditions mentioned above demonstrates this range of interest. The only valid frame of reference for U Tam'si is the tradition in which he was raised, the Negritude of mid-century francophone Africa. He retains many of the precepts of Negritude, especially the impulse to identify with rather than turn from Africa. In Légendes Africaines he even fulfills one aspect of this tradition, the "retour aux sources". But he has broken with it insofar as he rejects the principles of collective salvation and of a privileged consciousness of the black race. Behind Negritude, and embodied within it in the form of certain assertions and literary fancies, is the tribal African tradition in which the poet reveals "surreal" truths, and reveals them for his people as a whole rather than for himself. U Tam'si's poetry

decidely has something of the "surreal" about it, but the claim that it continues a Bantu tradition is, at best, dubious; the allegation that U Tam'si participates in an intimate relationship with his people is unfounded. There is some truth in the declaration that U Tam'si's sense of engagement is similar to that of traditional poetry, given the disparity of situations, but this modern sense is formed under different circumstances and, in any event, has been achieved by a partial repudiation of the tenets of Negritude, the Neo-African esthetic that lies between him and his traditional past.

CHRISTOPHER OKIGBO

Before you, mother Idoto
 naked I stand,
 before your watery presence,
 a prodigal,

leaning on an oilbean;
 lost in your legend....

Heavensgate

U Tam'si's poetry is directed towards personal liberation, the breaking of bonds; Okigbo's is concerned with establishing bonds, with drawing parallels and implicating himself in a network of cultural cross-references. "Okigbo's poetry is a poetry of responses to pattern and organization."⁴⁶ His poetry is syncretic, that of a man whose range of interests and reading is held in a secure state of equilibrium.

A brief glance at one of his poems will demonstrate the extent to which Okigbo's are poems of synthesis, and thus show the necessity of considering the European as well as the African elements in his work.

And the flower weeps
 unbruised,
Lacrimae Christi,

for him who was silenced;

whose advent

dumb bells in the dim light celebrate
with wine song:

Messiah will come again,
After the argument in heaven;
Messiah will come again,
Lumen mundi...

Fingers of penitence
bring to a palm grove
vegetable offering
with five
fingers of chalk. (HG 32)

The technique, the broken and indented phrasing, the quotation of Latin, are clearly contemporary European, as is the central motif, Christian communion. And yet the poem is organized around a natural image, a flower, perhaps even an Easter lily, whose shape simultaneously evokes the weeping of Christ and a traditional Africa ritual, vegetable offering in a sacred grove. The flower, with its five pollen-bearing stamens within the inverted cone of its petals, suggests the spirit and setting of an offering to one of the pantheon of African gods. The religion and rites of two cultures are conflated into a single symbol, and this symbol, within the context of the series of poems from which it is drawn, represents the achievement of a new ritual which reverberates with meanings from both of the old ones.

This is an intellectual achievement rather than an emotional one. The poet's elan is less important than his ability to compose a pattern upon which he and his readers can meditate.

Because Okigbo lived at a crossroads of cultures, and is temperamentally inclined to absorb them rather than reject, his poetry is a constant crossing of words and themes. His stated aim is that of "mingling old tunes with new".⁴⁷ He actively assimilates rather than repulses European influences.

Okigbo, no less than U Tam'si, or the Negritude writers, is concerned with identity, the essence of his being. He has not chosen to seek this essence in liberation, in the sense U Tam'si would use this word. Instead, he opened himself up to a dialogue with Western literature and culture. His early poetry commences a turning away from urban existence, and his personal and poetic growth lead to an African engagement much more than literary: a military death in a war for national independence. But the steps along this route, the will-of-the-wisp religion of Heavensgate, the symbolic and trance-like dream of Limits, are marked allusions to Western literature, with parallels between his own and Western culture, with literary masks, roles he has chosen to play to broaden his own identity. When one speaks of the tradition behind Okigbo, one must take into account many different ones, the cosmopolitan and comparative tradition of Pound, the tribal African tradition, and the nascent modern African tradition in English. The changes he has effected upon these traditions is his absorption of them all, for Okigbo has sought to make all traditions his own.

To understand why Okigbo, who was born in 1932 near Onitsha and died fighting on the secessionist side of the Nigerian Civil War, was in a position to assimilate what he chose rather than struggle against that which was imposed upon him, one must understand the differences between the intellectual climates of anglophone and francophone Africa.

Okigbo and his generation were the first to write skilful English poetry. They are preceded only by the "pioneer" poets, those versifiers whose awkward writings were the earliest expression of the "educated African". Today, the sentiments found in those poems are not only enough to make "any Negritude poet see red,"⁴⁸ but as embarrassing to sophisticates such as Okigbo, or Wole Soyinka, as his own adolescent verse must be to any accomplished poet. Dennis Osadebey, who had studied law in England, exemplifies these pioneer poets:

My simple fathers
In childlike faith believed all things;
It cost them much
And their offspring lost a lot;
They questioned not the lies of magic
And fetish seemed to have some logic. 49

It is clear that this fragment depends upon not only the ideology of the English colonizers, but also the pedestrian techniques of those who consider poetry a form of sincere expression published in the

corners of popular magazines. These verses do not even imitate good English poetry, as the work of Oswald Durant, against whom the proponents of Légitime Défense inveighed, did French.⁵⁰

And herein lies a clue to the difference between English and French poetry in Africa: the elite of the French had been indoctrinated in the heights of French culture; the first educated English speakers were taught practical matters perhaps, but were never so assimilated that they understood the most hermetic expression of English (or any) culture, its poetry. The result was that the French elite transcended the period of cultural disarray, which inevitably accompanies social disruptions on the scale of those which have afflicted Africa for a century or more, and came to terms with their situation before the English. Inversely, when the Nigerian prise de conscience took hold in the fifties, the educated English elite did not have as much alien culture to purge, as they did invidious economic and social forces.

Okigbo and his peers benefited from an irony of English colonialism which has escaped few commentators.⁵¹ English "indirect rule" utilized, as far as possible, existing African social structures. Interested in achieving economic control over Africa, the English allowed the political structures to stand. Chiefs remained in power if they cooperated with the British Government; and the people were permitted their own culture, insofar as it could remain theirs under

the economic exploitation practices upon them. There was never any question of making "Black Englishmen," because the colour of their skins was sufficient evidence that the Africans could never become "civilized". Missionaries came and imposed Christianity, of course, and established school systems. But the instruction was carried on at the primary levels in the indigenous languages. A more than practical command of English, or comprehension of English literature and culture, was not fostered. The aim was to create a competent middle class which could run its own affairs, in the best interest of England, and as soon as universities were established in Nigeria, as many of this needed class as possible were educated at home. The irony is that a thoroughgoing and racist contempt for African culture and traditions prompted circumstances which sustained, in its victims, a relative sense of identity. Compare this with the French system, which conceded the possibility of assimilation, but arrogantly assumed that the indigenous cultures were of no use to Africans. The French system, while permitting assimilation of a black elite, ripped away the roots of that elite (without making it fully French); whereas the English, who disdained both the colour and the culture of the Africans, protected and even encouraged African institutions.

Within this context, Okigbo's receptivity to foreign influences,

at little cost to his own identity, is easier to understand. Although he read Classics in university, he was schooled entirely within his own country, at Government College, Umuahia, and University College, Ibadan, where there were enough students of his bent to form a circle of Nigerian poets similar to the Oxford group in England in the thirties.⁵² Drumbeats and thatched huts, the nostalgic emblems of Africa to the poets sequestered and alienated in Paris, are commonplace to the African who remains there, and for whom they can never become distant and romantic abstractions. Okigbo may well have felt an anomaly between reading Virgil and strolling through the Ibadan market, may have felt himself, in the words of Gabriel Okara, "wandering in the mystic rhythm / of jungle drums and the concerto "⁵³; but he may equally well have sensed a beauty and significance in the synthesis which he, at an intellectual level, and his compatriots, at a daily level, were creating.

This relatively beneficial side of English colonialism does not obviate the damage which the entire process inflicted. Nor has the comparative lack of pressure upon the English poets prevented the conflict of cultures, the question of identity, from being the major theme of literature in English. In spite of the fact that Nigerian literature did not really come into its own until after the political (if not economic and cultural) liberation of Africa

was assured, the problems of European domination were, and are, by no means resolved. The point is rather that, for the variety of reasons cited above, the style and tone of English-speaking Africa is different from that of French-speaking Africa. Sunday Anozie's Sociologie du roman africain makes the excellent point that the basic processes of cross-cultural contact are much the same in English and French Africa. He warns against a "too static" presentation of African reality, a "literary bipartism".⁵⁴ His advice is well-taken, but at the same time, one cannot explain certain facts, for example the more rapid development of literature in French, or the anglophone rejection of Negritude, without resorting to a bipartite model. One could argue by analogy that a similar process was in operation during the industrialization of England and France, but one is still obliged to account for the multitude of differences between the two countries, and their literatures. The amount of European influence upon U Tam'si and Okigbo is probably much the same (as if such factors could be qualitatively measured). But the differences between them and their peers should be explained, and can perhaps be sought in their respective approaches to common problems: the relationship of the modern African to his past, and to the cultural and political presence of Europe.

As for the French poets, much of the "traditional past" towards

which the English turn is a reconstruction, a body of ideas spawned by Western anthropology. Even the poet with genuine roots in the past acquires the basic of these myths in his Western-style education. Experiential and intuitive knowledge of tribal life is supplemented and no doubt reorganized along the lines laid down by anthropology. For example, Jomo Kenyatta's Facing Mount Kenya greatly benefits from the author's first hand knowledge of his tribe, the Kikuyu of Kenya. But the life of his people is presented anthropologically, in terms of kinship systems and social organization.

The stance towards tradition in anglophone Africa differs from that in francophone Africa partially because most French poets, including U Tam'si, spent a portion of their lives, often the most formative years, in France, whereas the English remained in Africa, in contact with African life. Accordingly, less of the African experience has been reified, reduced to the distance of books. A hypothesis such as this is difficult to substantiate, but there is some evidence that it is true. The transcription of folklore suggests that the francophone Africans are now more concerned with concrete reality than before. But U Tam'si's tales are first a work of scholarship. French Africa has long been at the school of the Africanists. In contrast, there is very little personal in tone (such as in J. P. Clark's "Night Rain"⁵⁵) in French Africa.

Anglophone poets are less likely to adulate the past, less likely to use it as a direct inspiration for their works. Wole Soyinka can go so far as suggesting in his play The Dance of the Forests, written for the Nigerian independence celebrations, that the corruption and immorality of the present is also a heritage from the legendary and usually glorified past. On the whole, they are aware that they are no longer creating in the same sociological context as their forefathers. Griaule's research on the Dogon is excellent anthropology. But when his findings are applied directly to the poetry of the printed page, several factors are being ignored. The context of the oral poet, whose social role ranges from entertainer to historian to prophet, or even simple hunter, is fundamentally different from that of the poet whose printed works reach his audience through the intermediaries of the publisher and bookseller, and are read, if at all, as books, with all the sociological implications of that word. The transfer of poetry from an oral to a written form entails a number of changes within the poetic process.

There is no readily apparent continuity between the creative writings of modern Nigerian authors and the traditional literature of Nigeria, which, with the exception of a certain amount of material in the Arabic script, was exclusively oral. Indeed, one is tempted to believe that the two are of a totally different nature and that any link between them is either a fiction of the expatriate critic's imagination or merely fortuitous. 56

The same holds true for writings in French, even in such cases as Légendes Africaines or Diop's Contes d'Amadou Kouba.

The shift from oral to written literature in modern Africa has also meant a shift from a social frame of reference to a personal one. Okigbo, whose intensely personal poetry often provides an escape into the impersonal (one of the many links between Okigbo and Eliot), and who has said, "I don't think that I have ever set out to communicate a meaning,"⁵⁷ is decidedly outside of the tribal tradition, for which poetry was a form of social intercourse and a means of reinforcing values. The tribal poet was not only acoustically connected to his audience, but he shared its values and daily life in a way beyond the imagination of a Western or Westernized poet. Poetry in Africa was close to song, was often accompanied with musical instruments, and song was the property of every man. Although the role of the poet was often specialized, as in the case of the griot, the poet-historian of the Sudan, it was more widely distributed than in the West. Kwabena Nketia's article on "Akan Poetry" gives examples of the occasions for tribal poetry.⁵⁸

A traditional African poetic statement was related to proverb, and its meaning was easily accessible to members of the tribal community. "There is frequent use of quotation from celebrated minstrels and people reputed for their wisdom."⁵⁹ This is differ-

ent from Okigbo's frequent allusions and hidden echoes, one of which, the Latinized pidgin version of "Little Bo Peep," has confounded one of his own Ibo tribesmen, a student of literature at London University.⁶⁰ As this last example should indicate, Okigbo's poetry was intended for his own pleasure as much as his reader's, for the expression of his own problems more than his society's. His poetry is personal both in the sense that it is "riddled" with personal meanings, and that he alone, if anyone, could understand it fully. A passage from Limits reveals his distance from his audience:

Then we must sing
Tongue-tied without name or audience
Making harmony among the branches. (L. 3)

Compare this to an expression of the traditional use of poetry, its rapport with its audience:

Our poetry has tended to give prominence to persons, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes and values derived from our conception of the universe. We do not spend time on the daffodils or the nightingale, the night sky and so on as things in themselves, but only in relation to social experience. Our poetry is full of animals and plants, but these are used because they provide apt metaphors or simile, or compressed ways of reflecting upon social experience. ⁶¹

Since all poetry is related to its social context, all poetry, in a sense, reflects social experience. But the direct and exclusive links between traditional poetry and its society are of a different order than those between the modern poet and his society.

Another attempt to correlate modern African literature with its oral predecessors is based upon similarities of devices and effects. There are two stumbling-blocks in this path. The first is that catalogues of poetic features are an easy but useless thing to compile, as Michael Echeruo says in his article, "Tradition and Borrowed Elements in Nigerian Poetry".⁶² The traits which most readily identify it, metaphor and heightened language, are universal to all poetry, and any features missing in one literature but present in another (Yoruba poetry, for example, lacks rhyme), may not be an essential quality of poetry, or may not be crucial to the former. At the bottom, this mode of investigation is handicapped by the lack of any final definition of poetry.

The other impediment to this approach which affects both poets and critics is the dissimilarity of African and European languages. J. P. Clark asks how one can "speak of or detect vernacular rhythms, influences and sources present or imagined in works by African creative writers in English and French, unless one is versed in the vernacular of a particular author".⁶³ His question is relevant, for those who do not speak Ibo, including many Nigerians, are in no position to recognize specific traits of Ibo in Okigbo's poetry, either rhythms which are carried over into the English, or translated tags of proverbs and folk songs.

An expatriate who speaks no African language at all will be in an even worse position. Nevertheless, there is a point after which this warning is no longer valid. The kinds of influences which a knowledge of Ibo, or any relevant African language, would illuminate, are not likely to occur. It is nearly impossible to transfer the rhythms and imagery of African languages, which are tonal and of an entirely different grammar, into European ones. Attempts at reviving the devices of Anglo-Saxon poetry have on the whole been unsatisfactory. The difficulty increases enormously when it is no longer a question of an earlier stage of the same language, but an altogether different one. Adali-Mortty's article on "Ewe Poetry" demonstrates the rhythmical systems of an African language, and reveals some of the problems involved.⁶⁴

In general, anglophone African poets recognize these differences between the poetic craft of their forefathers, and their own. The concept of the progenitive Word, so touted by Césaire and Senghor, is without influence in English Africa. The poets admit that they have lost the immediate social relevance of tribal poetry, and in fact often insist upon the personal nature of their poetry. They accept that they are creating within a different linguistic context-- a language with its own potential beauties. This admission does not

preclude attempts to communicate some of the thoughts and images which these men, all bilingual, find hard to express in standard English. Beneath the English which a poet like Okigbo wrote so well is an African language, a native tongue, generating images in its own way, containing a different world of experience.

There are two ways in which these images can be communicated in literary English. The first has been attempted by J. P. Clark in several of his poems, but especially in The Imprisonment of Obatala, and by the poet Gabriel Okara in his novel, The Voice. This involves a distortion of English syntax in such a way that the "accumulated impact will tend away from that cultural area we call 'English' and back to the indigenous one".⁶⁵ Okara's novel alters English word order to simulate the gerundive effect of Ijaw syntax. Clark creates compounds composed of English words, but which are decidedly not standard English. Yet if one considers what Hopkins, as well as contemporary advertisers, have done to English, it is difficult to claim that this is uniquely African.

The other way of expressing these "non-European" experiences is the subtle use of all the faculties of standard English to convey "African" images. Okigbo belongs to this latter current. Apart from the "content" of his poetry, there is no easy way to

distinguish its "African-ness".

In the long run there will no doubt be a standard African English, in the same way that there is a Canadian French and an American English. There is already a distinct West African English spoken by the people, but apart from a few poems in pidgin, those by Frank Aig-Imoukhuede and George Awoonor-Williams, this dialect has not been utilized.

All of this is not to say the anglophone African poets are not extremely concerned with maintaining an African tradition. It is unfair to claim that the English poets are always more personal, always more concrete, than the French. The English have rejected Negritude, and it is indicative of the extent to which the two parts of Africa have been assimilated that the anglophone critics look upon Negritude as typical of the "French" penchant for movements, schools, and literary dogmas. Wole Soyinka's comment on Negritude is the most famous: a tiger does not proclaim his tigritude; he kills his prey and eats it. But the English have a reified sense of their past as well. And it is often difficult, when one analyzes the traditional elements in an English poem, to distinguish that which is intuitively traditional, intellectually traditional, or simply a coincidence of international and tradition. Several examples will clarify the problem.

Gerald Moore's article, "The Imagery of Death in African Poetry," argues that the treatment of death in traditional and modern poetry is similar. There is no doubt that death is a major theme of traditional poetry, for it is often occasioned by funerals, or reflection upon them. But death is a theme in all literatures.⁶⁶

An African poet who deals with death will identify himself as African only if death is seen, traditionally, as a passing into another world of living spirits or ancestors, or as the subject of a search for a meaning which will replace, while referring back to, the defunct traditional meaning of death. Wole Soyinka's "Death in the Dawn," is an example of the latter.⁶⁷ In either of these cases it is difficult to determine whether the initial impulse was "traditional," or the result of a study of African culture, study which has informed the poet that he is obliged to treat death in a particular way in order to express "his" culture. In fact, it is always possible, and appears to be the case in Soyinka's poem, that a recent personal experience is the source of the poem, and that the poetic process has allowed a slow accumulation of images from all aspects of the poet's life, from his years of living in a tropical environment, and from his Western education.

Another example is Okigbo's recurrent image of the protagonist before a shrine. African religion was practiced with rituals

of various kinds, but one of the most common was the offering before a shrine in a sacred grove. But Okigbo was an Ibo and in frequent contact with Catholic ritual, which is at times not greatly different. How much of Okigbo's shrine is owed to remembrance of shrines past; how much to a concentrated "rethinking" of the offertory and its implications; how much to the fact that this image allowed him to conflate symbols of two cultures? In other words, it is necessary to understand the essentials of the tribal culture underlying the modern poet, but it is simple-minded to treat this poet as a passive receptacle for any current of thought.

A final example from Okigbo's work will disclose another twist. The last section of his laudatory poem to Yeats, "Lament of the Masks," is a variation upon an oriki, a Yoruba praise-song, in the "native oral formulaic tradition," to a victorious warrior-chief. In the same way that Pound adapted classical poems for his own use, Okigbo took a traditional poem and applied its imagery, and function, to a modern English poem. The interesting point is that Okigbo worked from an English translation. His variation on the oriki is on the one hand a resetting of tradition material, a literary use of the material instead of a poem inspired by it, and on the other hand an example of how the "reified," that is, "bookish," tradition predominates in a poet who has chosen the Western mode of literature. Okigbo's African source, in this case, was neither his

own tribe's poetry, nor even in an African language.

Because the very natures of indigenous and modern literatures differ, the direct influence of the former upon the latter is limited. One who is truly traditional would never consider "writing" a poem. An English poet attempting the Homeric manner is as distant from, and near to, his sources as an African poet who simulates a traditional form. In both cases, the material must first be made literary, in the sense that it belongs in books, before it can be made into literature.

Clearly one implication is that if we accept Okigbo's idea of poetry, we more or less have to forget any tradition of indigenous Nigerian poetry, because that poetry has never worked, even implicitly, with the idea of poetry as pure pattern. 69

The patterning or structuring concerns of Okigbo's poetry precludes any other connections between the present and the past.

This does not mean that it is safe to ignore the African side of Okigbo's poetry. On the contrary, one must be extremely aware of the themes, myths, and forms of tribal poetry. The guiding principle in identifying the effect of tradition upon an English poet is thus similar to what it was for a French one: one must understand "African tradition" to mean not only the psychological and cultural impact of tribal life (an impact weakened by years of Western education), but also a body of ideas

about tribal life which influences and enters into African poetry in the same way that the West's notions of itself shape Western poetry. The difference between the African poets of French and English expression is that the latter have not accepted the doctrine of Negritude, and are therefore less concerned with the tradition per se. But they have just the same reconstructed their past, and are just the same concerned with the poetic use of it.

Traditional African poetry varies in theme, style, and mood not only from tribe to tribe, but from poem (or "performance of poem") to poem. Almost any theme or motif in any of the world's literatures could, with some slight manipulation, be corroborated with another in Africa. Accordingly, it is hard to claim that a specific theme in modern African poetry finds its sources in traditional poetry. "We cannot say with great precision what in the traditional poetry has influenced what in the modern poetry."⁷⁰ That there is some transfer of traditional concerns to modern poetry is without a doubt. The question is how, and in the case of a conscious poet like Okigbo, why this transfer occurs.

When Okigbo wrote his poems prophesying war, poems which more than any of his others resemble a traditional genre, the inspiration was the immediate situation of Nigeria, and his

involvement in it. A personal situation, rather than a literary work or genre inspired the poems, yet they derive much of their strength from their association with a traditional genre. "Path of Thunder" incorporates the same harsh imagery directed to the same end (the depiction of the horrors and compulsion of war) as tribal war poems. The stark imagery recalls the symbols of traditional African gods. Images of iron, with which the Yoruba god of war, Ogun, is associated, dominate. Thunder, the emblem of another Yoruba god, Shango, rumbles across the land. The elephant, which represents the society being destroyed, is slain by the warriors. Two of the poems, "Elegy for slit-drum" and "Elegy for Alto," duplicate the effect of battle chants, the latter breaking into simulation of breathless shouts. Yet the poems refer to contemporary events, to generals, robbers, politicians. Were the poems not on the printed page, intended for publication in an obscure literary journal, one could say that they serve the same function as traditional war poems. But a crucial difference remains: rather than stirring the spirits of warriors, the poems are intended to create new myths, myths which were in fact the last ones Okigbo enacted, those of the soldier, the militant. The traditional elements in the poems are present to add depth, historical and cultural implications. The traditional theme of

war, and the attention drawn to the fact that war was traditional, have a literary rather than social function. Tradition is important only insofar as it illuminates and expands upon the contemporary situation. To draw an analogy, Okigbo uses his heritage in the same way that Virgil used Homer when composing the Aeneid. Reference to the past valor, and imagery, of war enriches the new war poems, allows for a comparison between the cultures, provides a perspective from which to view the two. In other words, this use of tradition is not greatly different from Eliot's use of myth in "The Wasteland," or Pound's use of historical allusion in the Cantos.

The fact that his "strong intellectual and imaginative interest in traditional ideas about many things"⁷¹ enters Okigbo's poetry as allusion, not as subject matter. The first French poets, especially Senghor, wrote nostalgically about their traditional past. Reference to the past was an assertion of one's racial identity. Okigbo wrote about a personal experience or problem and broadened the poems with reference to the past. The traditional themes were weighed and tested against the demands of the present, but they were never self-sufficient. Gerald Moore speaks of the "sort of sophisticated examination of inherited beliefs that we find in a writer like Euripides".⁷² But the African examination of a cultural inheritance is more complex than that. Euripides

was questioning and altering the myths of his own people, but he did not have to bridge Greek and non-Greek culture. Okigbo was obliged to straddle two cultures, to seek out and identify their imprints upon him; and finally to unify them. This unity comes only in the examination of personal experience. In the end Okigbo's search was for himself, for his "own mask / not ancestral---" (HG. 35). And like Pound, to whose personae he is alluding, he is willing to try on a number of roles for size, willing to generate any kind of new myths, from any sources. It happens that one of the major sources for these roles is African tribal tradition.

The traces of Okigbo's concern for tradition are scattered throughout his poems. The "invocation" to his first important sequence of poems, Heavensgate, signals his veneration for the past:

Before you, mother Idoto,
 naked I stand,
 before your watery presence,
 a prodigal,

leaning on an oilbean;
 lost in your legend. . . . (HG. 5)

Idoto, the goddess of Ijoto, Okigbo's native village, is at once his muse and a symbol for the legendary past he was reclaiming. Humility before this past, nakedness, was necessary, even for Okigbo, the prodigal. The oilbean is the sacred tree of her cult,

and the poet recognized his dependency upon it. Idoto's shrine is at the edge of a river (she is in fact associated with water), and hers is the first of many shrines throughout Heavensgate. Often these pilgrimages are no more than brief visits ("I have visited, / on palm beam imprinted / my pentagon-- / I have visited, the prodigal" HG. 31); but all of the poems turn towards and return to this source, Okigbo's tribal roots. Dathrone points out that Okigbo's earliest poems, "Four Canzones," contain three levels of imagery, the traditional, the modern, and the personal. Preference is always expressed for the first: Okigbo rejected the urban values of "Debtor's Lane" and moved towards the pastoral past, a movement which he made physically as well as poetically.

Here the poet extols and also prefers the pastoral ease and security of village life to the more complicated life in a modern city. The poet thus insinuates (and here Okigbo is strongly partisan to the Negritude tradition) that the sole course open to the uprooted exile or prodigal is a return in humility and penitence to the original source of his being. 73

Constant awareness of his past enabled the poet to incorporate it both ironically (the obscene Ibo song about ram's testicles⁷⁴), and religiously. When the poet retreated to the hills (HG. 30), he referred simultaneously to Western romantic tradition and to the hill-worship of many Nigerian tribes.

References to African tradition are not always to the pastoral

and pleasant. As Okigbo developed as a poet, he sought fulfillment less in the calm of religion, more in the apocalyptic intensity of violence. "Four Canzones" and Heavensgate reflect the former mood; Limits and "Path of Thunder" reflect the latter. Accordingly, the blood and pain of the circumcision ritual came to symbolize the suffering and carnage of what he had to accomplish to resolve his conflicts.

The man embodies the child
The child embodies the man; the man remembers
The song of the innocent,
Of the uncircumcized at the sight of the flaming razor--

The chief priest of the sanctuary has uttered
the enchanted words;
The bleeding phallus,
Dripping fresh from the carnage cries out for
the medicinal leaf.... ("Elegy of the Wind")

Tribal initiation evokes and prepares for the thunder, the prophesied war which Okigbo later fought and died in. Tradition does not serve, in this case, as an emblem for the escape from the West and the conflicts it has bred, but rather parallels that horror which the poet goes forth to encounter.

Throughout all of the poems, then, Okigbo's knowledge of and interest in his heritage appeared whenever it could broaden the meaning of his personal situation. Even Mother Idoto, to whom the prodigal returns, metamorphoses into a Western figure. Tradi-

tional themes and myths were employed whenever they illuminated the poet's dilemma, not for themselves. Okigbo came to grips with African poetry by fusing it into the pattern of his poetry. The poet's mask was his own mask, a visage which, because it could adopt many expressions, was richer than one in any pure style.

It should be clear from previous examples that Okigbo's technique and method derived from contemporary European poetry, not from the oral and formulaic tradition. Allusion to and synthesis of a range of cultures, myths, and literatures was one of the chief elements of poetry written in English in the first half of the twentieth century. Eliot and Pound were the most famous practitioners of this style, the ostensible reason for which was the reintegration of a European culture broken asunder by the economic and social forces of their time. Although this syncretism was valid for its innovators, it has spawned schools of lesser imitators. Many poets unable to find a personal mode of poetry have taken up Eliot's and Pound's methods.

Okigbo does not belong in this last class of poets. His use of the "modernist" method was the result of his particular circumstances. Like them, he was faced with the necessity of reconstructing a heritage out of fragments. His identity was even

less secure than that of Eliot and Pound. His quest for himself was complicated because he had to discover not only a past (a past which was for him as "civilizing" as it was for Eliot), but maintain a feeling for the past in the face of another dominating and disruptive culture, the very culture which Pound and Eliot were espousing. The two Anglo-Europeans were in search of Culture; Okigbo of a new culture.

Accordingly, Okigbo's allusive and syncretic method was neither plagiarism nor facile borrowing. He found, in the same way that francophone Africans discovered the techniques of Surrealism, a technique which answered his needs. That both Surrealism and the English syncretic method were the predominant influences in their respective literatures at the time that the Africans came into contact with those literatures does not necessarily mean that U Tam'si and Okigbo adopted the most obvious elements of the metropolitan literatures. Both have made unique use of the techniques; both techniques are fitted to resolve the problems facing each poet.

Okigbo's "content," the synthesis and conflict of cultures, required a "form" composed enough for his readers to meditate upon his fusion of old and new. This synthesis of old and new was

not an adjunct, a side effect, of his poems. It was their primary intention. As a result, his poetry is one of pattern, or organization. There is no doubt that this poetry of pattern parallels Pound's, but other anglophone African poets are well read in modern English poetry and yet write in a different way. J. P. Clark, for example, is more interested in imagery, and his "Ibadan" is an imagist poem. Wole Soyinka has employed the ironic tone of the early Eliot in his "Telephone Conversation". But Okigbo has selected the lyricism and allusion of Pound.

Okigbo expressed his definition of poetry both in the poems themselves and in interview. The central passage within the poems is in Heavensgate:

Screen your bedchamber thoughts
with sunglasses;
who could jump your eye,
your mind-window?

And I said:
The prophet only,
the poet.

And he said:
Logistics.

Which is what poetry is.

Which is what poetry is. (HG. 18)

Logistics has two connotations: the first and more usual is

"the branch of military science having to do with moving, supply-

ing, and quartering troops". The second connotation is an unrelated adjective which echoes the noun: "the art of calculation," deriving ultimately from logos, word. Echeruo's interpretation of the above poem is interesting:

Poetry, Okigbo asserts, is a means of making contact with 'bedchamber thoughts,' a way of jumping the window of the mind. This can be done either through prophecy-- priest and seer, or through logistics-- the economist and mathematician. Prophecy is rejected in favour of logistics-- the calculated stance, the complicated pattern of rehearsed strategies. 75

Presumably, the poet is the quartermaster of words.

It is incorrect, however, to ignore the "seer" side of Okigbo's poetry. Poems may be patterns, but his are frequently lyrical patterns. Preceding the poem just quoted, Okigbo celebrated, as a "minstrel" and a "shepherd with a flute," a madman who "went through the markets in the Aguata division in Eastern Nigeria lecturing people by singing".⁷⁶ Furthermore, Okigbo warned against a too analytical approach to his poems.

There is an intellectual effort which one makes before one arrives at what one calls the meaning. Now, I think it is possible to arrive at a response without passing through that process of intellectual analysis, and I think that if the poem can elicit a response in either physical or emotional terms from an audience, the poem has succeeded. I don't think I have ever set out to communicate a meaning. It is enough that I try to communicate experiences which I consider significant. 77

But this understanding of the intuitional element of poetry is

not different from that expressed by most poets in the twentieth century. Although the poems are carefully constructed, their effect often lies outside of the realm of reason. Even the early, calmer poems function not as explicit statements, but as patterns of intuition. And in the later poems, the calm control of pattern was loosened, and poetry came closer to chant, to raving, to prophecy. In any case, the two conceptions of poetry, logistics and prophecy, are within the European tradition. They have been critically assessed as polar tendencies, and attributed to Mallarme and Rimbaud, respectively.

The impact of Europe upon Okigbo was not limited to his technique and conception of poetry. His entire body of work reverberates with echoes of one kind or another: a word, a phrase, an entire sentence from his early poems may reoccur in his later ones. To the echoes from his own work are added suggestions and quotations of a great number of other writers. Tanglewood Tales, by Hawthorne, became "tangled-wood tales" (HG. 8). The titles of The Radiance of the King (le Regard du roi), by Camara Laye, and Arrows of God, by Chinua Achebe, were fitted into lines of verse (L. 9; PT. 7), as is U Tam'si Brush Fire (PT. 7). Okigbo's early "lavender-mist" was contrasted with the "smell of blood" (PT. 7). Pound's "rock-drill" has a place in Limits (7), and Yeats, whose "Second Coming" had already

furnished the central image of Achebe's Things Fall Apart, and for whom "Lament of the Masks" was a praise poem, entered as well:

Provided movement is around
the burning market,
the centre-- (L. 12)

And Echeruo cites a long list of allusions to Pound, Eliot, and Mallarme.

Often it is difficult to understand the necessity of this deluge of allusion, apart from Okigbo's expressed desire to appear one of the "literate" generation, a prodigal. Yet to the reader who notices them, they frequently indicate a similarity of concern with the poets they allude to. Yeats' centre which cannot hold is singularly appropriate to Limits, a collection which on at least one level deals with the disintegration of Africa under European imperialism. Dathorne has insisted upon the "Social and Moral" aspects of "Debtor's Lane" and correlated them to the "early encroachment of T. S. Eliot-- a poet similarly concerned-- as the major poetic influence upon Okigbo".⁷⁸

But not all of Okigbo's allusions were serious, not all intelligible. The Latinized pidgin version of "Little Bo Peep" is an example: "etru bo pi alo a she e anando we aquandem..." (HG. 9). Dathorne, who was close to Okigbo in Ibadan, claims that the

references to Leidan, Anna, and Kepanly are inventions, and continues:

His poetry is full of allusion to a private mythological world; in Limits an allusion to Enki, to someone called Flannagan who "preached the Pope's message," to Yunice "at the passageway". All this can be very misleading, a stumbling block not only to eager non-African postgraduates bent on finding the "africanness" of the work, but even to Okigbo's fellow Ibo-speakers. 79

And this tendency, as well as the other hermetic elements of his poetry, has led at least one African critic to say that Africa, already fragmented along linguistic and cultural lines, cannot afford many more poets like Okigbo.⁸⁰ In the final analysis, however, these allusions are not a barrier to understanding Okigbo's poetry. A self-proclaimed mythmaker who reworks and restates his images and motifs, Okigbo creates meaning for these allusions by attributing the same meaning to them again and again. For example, "Anna of the panel oblongs," apparently an organist of some kind, is clearly a figure of salvation, of supplication.

Oh Anna at the knobs
 of the panel oblongs
 hear me at the crossroads
 at the great hinges (HG. 10)

And:

O Anna of the panel oblongs
 protect me
 from them fuckin angels,
 protect me
 my sandhouse and bones. (HG. 35)

Incidentally, and this is an example of the method at the base of Okigbo's poetry, "sandhouse and bones," a metonym for the poet's body and soul, is in his earlier poem, "Lament of the Flutes". In other words, allusions to European culture, and Culture, undergo the same process and serve the same function as the allusions to African culture. Whenever they are gratuitous, they are the result of Okigbo's sense of play, of humour. His knowledge of Western culture was proof of his prodigality, just as his references to African culture were evidence of the sincerity of his prodigal's return. Christian ritual was contrasted with African. The social and religious bent of Eliot was compared to Okigbo's. Pound's syncretism was confronted with an Ibo's. In one sense, Okigbo, the prodigal, declared himself the rival to and equal of the Europeans, for he pronounced himself the master of their work and then added his own dimension. In another, the significance of his work is broadened by his awareness of the implications of other works and cultures. Always, for Okigbo, assimilation was a victory, not a defeat, for his was the strength; he was the organizer; the pattern was Okigbo's.

Okigbo's range extended to the classics. Just as he adopted a traditional African form, the oriki, he reached into Virgil and, for his own purposes, wrote a variation on the First Eclogue.

Okigbo's version reads:

You loaf, child of the forest,
 beneath a village umbrella,
 plucking from tender string a

Song of the forest.

Me, away from home, run--
 away, must leave the borders of our
 land, fruitful fields,

must leave our homeland.

But you, child of the forest,
 loaf beneath an umbrella,
 teaching the woods to sing a

Song of the forest. ("First Canzone")

Virgil's original, in a translation by E. V. Rieu, reads:

Tityrus, while you lie there at ease under the awning
 of a spreading beech and practise country songs
 on a light shepherd's pipe, I have to bid good-bye
 to the home fields and ploughlands that I love. Exile
 for me, Tityrus-- and thou lie sprawling in the shade,
 teaching the woods to echo back the charms of
 Amaryllis.

This adaptation is especially felicitous, for Virgil's eclogue has as its theme the exile and sense of loss from a harmonious natural landscape which must be similar to that of an urban African. The lands and patrimony of Virgil's shepherd, Meliboeus, have been seized as payment for victorious Roman soldiers. Okigbo's persona, the poet, has lost his roots in the forest as a result of colonization, and the resulting urbanization. Okigbo, like Meliboeus, expressed the loss as loss not only of land, but of harmony, of song, and of a harmonious relationship with the land. Since Okigbo was a student of the classics, it is not surprising that he fell upon this parallel, for the Eclogues are required reading for

any classicist. And, at the time and place Okigbo wrote this canzone, Lagos, 1957, he was "exiled" from the upcountry village life he loved.

This poem, and the canzone which follows it, "Debtor's Lane," mark the poet's first movement back to his sources, the former with nostalgia for the forest, the latter with contempt for the city. This return to his sources culminated in Heavensgate. Okigbo's "Virgilian" canzone, therefore, fits into place. One who is unaware of the Latin lines behind the English misses nothing; one who is aware of the poem's source has another parallel for Okigbo's poetic and personal situation.

Furthermore, a comparison of the two poems indicates that Okigbo, when he adopted and quoted other poems, always adapted them to his needs, and not in a facile manner.

The borrowing is close. But notice that Okigbo has not attempted a cheap localizing of the sentiment: the "awning of spreading beech" has not been replaced by "iroko" or "mango tree". It is replaced by an appropriate generalization, "the village umbrella". So that the spirit of Virgil's Eclogue of the pains of exile is recaptured and transferred without recourse to any easy traditionalism. 81

Echeruo claims that Okigbo's adaptation of Virgil is more successful than his use of the oriki, basically because the language of the latter is stilted. But in each case, the same "literary" use of another poet was made. Each poem functions without

the reader knowing its source. Each source, once uncovered, becomes another reference point in the pattern, the superimposed commentary on a relatively small body of poetic sentiments. And once a reference like this entered Okigbo's poetry, it became subject to the refraction and repetition of all of his motifs: "shepherds with a flute" re-emerges in another sequence of poems (HG. 17).

This fusion of diverse literary and cultural motifs, previously evidenced by the assimilation of African poetic forms, and myths, and by European poetic techniques, literary forms, and motifs, applies to themes as well. Furthermore, since the intention of Okigbo's poetry was to compare literary feelings from different cultures, there is a fine line between a theme sparked by personal experience, and one which is "borrowed" from literature.

Okigbo's poetry, though intrinsically his own, is by its very nature a succession of roles. Okigbo, the prodigal, the "towncrier," the "mythmaker," was always posturing, trying on masks. And if he temporarily assumed the role of penitent in an African ritual, or the cosmopolitan stance of a classically educated poet, he did so on his own terms. Accordingly, the question is not where any of his themes may have originated, but what was his use of them.

For example, nature, which is present in his early poems as a refuge, a sacred source of personal and religious inspiration, has been the topic of much Western poetry. The English Romantics, especially Wordsworth, found a consolation in it not altogether dissimilar to Okigbo's. Yet Okigbo's nature, his groves and beaches, has a quality altogether different from Wordsworthian pantheism. (This is not an "African" consciousness of nature, for it is futile to correlate anthropological images of a continent's culture with the images of a "self-conscious" poet. Okigbo was at once aware of what he, an African, thought, and what he was supposed to think, as a "textbook African".) The religious conception of nature in "Four Canzones" and Heavensgate was not borrowed from Western writers. It was his own. The same can be said of the religious side of his poetry, for which there are many precedents in both the West and Africa. "If Okigbo's poems are about anything, then Heavensgate attempts to work out the initiation into and the evolution of a religion,"⁸² But this religion, and the necessity for it, is not Eliot's, or Dante's, or Milton's, or Okigbo's father's. It is the result of a particular poetic process which assimilated, and continually reasserted, a body of motifs from many circumstances, and applied them

to a specific situation.

From the beginning to the end of his work, the poet is the prodigal whose constant effort is to absorb all that he can, as intensely as possible. This hunger for intensity leads him away from the trivia of the city, but deeply into Western culture and literature. It leads back to Idoto, to the calm but strong feelings at his sources. Finally it leads him, almost against his will, into war, into the "narrow neck of a calabash" (PT. 6).

CONCLUSION

Apart from the differences between the anglophone and francophone poets of Africa, great enough to assure the separate development of the two literatures in the immediate future, there are some general similarities. Although each has drawn upon the Western literature in its respective language, and of course reaches the international audience of that language, they have an essential meeting point: both must come to terms with the fact that they are African, not simply English or French. To some extent, this coming to terms with Africa is and will be structured by the "climates" dominating the two literary cultures. Both the poets' relationship to traditional Africa, and to the modern Africa in which they live, is determined by mechanisms which stretch across national or linguistic barriers.

In the first place, there can be no direct relationship with the traditional past. The sociological contexts of art in traditional and modern Africa are of different natures. The modern poet is no longer relating to a closed and well-defined audience

of fellow tribesmen who are within reach of his voice. The values of traditional Africa are no longer relevant to those of developing Africa. Even in the few revolutionary states which have attempted to create an African socialism, the values of tribal society have been forcibly altered to fit the new situation. The modern poet is obliged to view tribal and traditional Africa through the lenses of modern, developing Africa. The literary modes and values of tribal Africa have become part of a reified tradition, a heritage which can no longer be lived, but which can be studied and can, as an intellectual superstructure, offer ideals.

The assumption that there are "three thousand years of black poetry" which have maintained a cultural unity is thus a dubious one. The relationship between Egyptian poetry and modern syncretic African verse is as tenuous as that between Homer and Ezra Pound. But, as between Homer and Pound, there is effectively a tradition if writers accept the existence of one, if they consciously model their works upon the textbook Odyssey, or the textbook oriki. A black poet who has been taught that he is in a three thousand year old tradition of black poetry, who identifies himself with this tradition, creates a tradition.

The first indirect relationship between a modern poet and

tribal tradition is thus the ideal, expressed by many modern poets, that they do belong to a tradition outside of the Western one.

This voluntary reclaiming of an African tradition is an act of engagement, in the sense that the poet chooses to define himself in terms of an intellectual construction which provides an identity outside of, and opposed to, that of the West. This critic is thus obliged to hold two notions in his mind at the same time: one is the concrete tribal tradition, which the poets cannot write within; the other is the reified tradition, according to which the modern poet is following in the footsteps of his traditional predecessors and reviving their values, his own ancestral heritage.

The ideals of this new tradition, the reified one, influence the poet whether or not they are appropriate to his own sociological context. It does not matter whether the phenomenology attributed to the black poets by Senghor is true; if the poets believe it is true, this belief affects their poetry. It happens that U Tam'si rejects a notion of privileged and intuitive black knowledge, that Okigbo saw himself, prodigal, as transcending any limited tradition. But each poet, U Tam'si in his early poetry and in Légendes Africaines, Okigbo in Heavensgate, identified himself with and sank spiritual roots into an African experience which was of value partially because it was in contrast to the Western one.

U Tam'si's symbolically hermetic, and Okigbo's syncretically personal poetry are actually distant from the tribal poet's communal songs, which were comprehensible to all; but both poets attach themselves to their communities: U Tam'si's poetic preoccupation with the Congo crisis, Okigbo's fatal involvement with the Nigerian secessionists, are perhaps the modern permutations of the traditional ideal. In any case, there is certainly no greater gap between Okigbo and the poets who sang oriki than between Pound and the Troubadour minstrels he idealized.

Traditional elements enter into modern poetry in different ways. U Tam'si does not make much use of the images and motifs of traditional literature, except in Légendes Africaines; Okigbo uses these elements in the same way he uses those of any culture, to complicate his meaning by drawing parallels between the past and present. But the work of both poets is marked by pervasive topicality; each is firmly rooted in the present African situation and refers to it in his poems. Maybe this involvement in the present is a better way to continue the African tradition than doting upon the lost relics and artifacts of the past. Total ethical involvement in life, which U Tam'si claims is the true engagement of the African tradition, certainly marks these two poets more than it does many Western modern-

ists, who are more concerned with esthetics than ethics.

In the final analysis, there is a paradoxical situation, but one which is perhaps related to the nature of literary traditions are large, and is more visible here because African literature is not part of the Western mainstream. What is most obvious, from the outside, is that gap between the traditional and the modern. Yet the links between the two are strongly asserted. African poets defined themselves in terms of a lost tradition, often ignoring the fact that the roles they play as poets, the audience they reach, the languages they write in, and the forms of their works are radically different from that tradition. Even a poet like U Tam'si, who wants to break all yokes, reclaims his tradition, nurtures himself on African legend.

Yet this is not very different from the role of tradition in Western literature. Poets apparently have the need to justify themselves in terms of a tradition. In another sense, they are driven to preserve, notwithstanding the changes they make upon a tradition, the values of a past in which they can no longer dwell.

- 10 Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, p. 294.
- 11 Senghor, "Introduction" to Tchicaya U Tam'si, Epitomé. Tunis, 1962, p. 7.
- 12 Kesteloot, Anthologie..., p. 246.
- 13 Aimé Césaire. Littérature africaine 9. Paris: Nathan, 1967.
And Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, passim.
- 14 Gerald Moore, "Surrealism and Negritude in the Poetry of Tchikaya U Tam'si", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction to African Literature, p. 108.
- 15 Kesteloot, Anthologie..., p. 94.
- 16 Abiola Irene, "Aime Cesaire; an Approach to His Poetry", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 68.
- 17 Moore, "Surrealism and Negritude...", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 106.
- 18 Thomas Melone, "New Voices of African Poetry in French", African Forum, I, No. 4 (Spring 1966), 69.
- 19 Senghor, "Postface" to his Ethiopiques. Paris, 1956, p. 107.
- 20 Janheinz Jahn, Muntu. New York, 1961, p. 135.
- 21 Jahn, ibid., p. 207.
- 22 Senghor, "l'Esprit de la civilisation", Présence Africaine, No. 8-9-10 (1956), p. 52.
- 23 Senghor, "Introduction" to U Tam'si, Epitomé, 1962, pp. 7-8.
- 24 Senghor, ibid., p. 8.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 George Wing, "Influence and Tradition...", Proceedings of the IVth Congress of ICLC. The Hague, 1966, p. 1202.
- 2 Lilyan Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs. Paris, 1963, p. 282 and pp. 288-294.
- 3 One should distinguish "intellectual climate," the result of language and education, which certainly varies according to former colonial policies, from "espace littéraire," which Sunday Anozie claims is the same for both French and British Africa (Sociologie du roman africain, p. 8).
- 4 Judith Gleason, This Africa. Evanston, 1965. Chapter One, "The Styles of the Conquerors," is the best study. A more specific analysis is Michael Crowder, Senegal: a Study in French Assimilation Policy. London, 1962.
- 5 Senghor in Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, p. 110.
- 6 Claude Wauthier, l'Afrique des Africains. Paris, 1964, is an excellent resume of Negritude outside of literature.
- 7 U Tam'si in Onuora Nzekwu, "Nigeria, Negritude and the World Festival of Negro Arts", Nigeria Magazine , 89 (1966), p. 80.
- 8 Gerald Moore, "The Negro Poet and His Landscape", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction to African Literature, p. 155.
- 9 Lilyan Kesteloot, Anthologie négro-africaine. Paris, 1967, p. 309.

- 25 Samuel Allen in W. A. Jeanpierre, "Negritude-- Its Development and Significance", Présence Africaine, English Edition, Vol; 11, No. 39 (1961), p. 46.
- 26 Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, p. 52.
- 27 Gustave von Grunebaum, French African Literature: Some Cultural Implications. New York, s.d., p. 28.
- 28 Senghor in Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, p. 92.
- 29 Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, pp. 97-99.
- 30 Kesteloot, ibid;, p. 97.
- 31 Claire Cea, "Introduction" to U Tam'si, Arc musical... Paris, 1970, pp. 14-15.
- 32 Gerald Moore, "Surrealism and Negritude...", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 107.
- 33 André Breton, Manifestes du surréalisme. Paris: Gallimard idées, s.d., p. 37.
- 34 Breton, ibid., p. 37.
- 35 Jean Onimus, la Connaissance poétique. Paris, 1966.
- 36 Moore, "Surrealism and Negritude...", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 109.
- 37 Jahn, Muntu, p. 148.
- 38 Irele, "Aime Cesaire", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 59.

- 39 Tchicaya U Tam'si, "Engagement et Tradition", African Arts / Arts d'Afrique, III, No. 3 (Spring 1970), p. 46.
- 40 U Tam'si, ibid., p. 47.
- 41 Melone, "New Voices...", p. 67.
- 42 Tchicaya U Tam'si, Légendes Africaines. Paris, 1968, p. 22.
- 43 U Tam'si, ibid., p. 22.
- 44 Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, p. 309.
- 45 U Tam'si in Austin Shelton, The African Assertion. New York, 1968, p. 246.
- 46 Michael Echeruo, "Traditional and Borrowed Elements in Nigerian Poetry", Nigeria Magazine, No. 89 (June 1966), p. 153.
- 47 Okigbo, "Lament of the Flutes".
- 48 Gerald Moore, Modern Poetry from Africa. Baltimore, 1968, p. 21.
- 49 Dennis Osadebey in Moore, Modern Poetry..., p. 21.
- 50 Kesteloot, Ecrivains noirs, p. 32.
- 51 Judith Gleason, This Africa. Chapter One is especially pertinent to the question of colonial policies.
- 52 J. P. Clark, Michael Echeruo, and Wole Soyinka were all there in the fifties.

- 53 Gabriel Okara in Moore, Modern Poetry..., p. 122.
- 54 Sunday Anozie, Sociologie du roman africain, pp. 7-8.
- 55 J. P. Clark in Moore, Modern Poetry..., pp. 112-113.
- 56 Michael Crowder, "Tradition and Change in Nigerian Poetry", Tri-Quarterly, No. 5 (1966), pp. 117-118.
- 57 Christopher Okigbo in O. R. Dathorne, "Ritual and Ceremony in Okigbo's Poetry", Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 5 (July 1968), pp. 89-90.
- 58 Kwabena Nketia, "Akan Poetry", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., pp. 23-33.
- 59 Geormbeeyi Adali-Mortty, "Ewe Poetry", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 10.
- 60 Dathorne, "Ritual and Ceremony...", Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 5 (July 1968), p. 81.
- 61 Nketia, "Akan Poetry", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., p. 32.
- 62 Echeruo, "Traditional Borrowed Elements in Nigerian Poetry", Nigeria Magazine, No. 89 (June 1966), p. 142.
- 63 J. P. Clark in Echeruo, ibid., p. 142.
- 64 Adaly-Mortty, "Ewe Poetry", in Ulli Beier (ed.), Introduction..., pp. 3-11.
- 65 Echeruo, op. cit., p. 142.
- 66 Gerald Moore, "The Imagery of Death in African Poetry",

Africa, XXXVIII (1968), 51.

- 67 Wole Soyinka, "Death in the Dawn", in Moore, Modern Poetry..., pp. 145-146.
- 68 Echeruo, "Traditional and Borrowed Elements...", p. 144.
- 69 Echeruo, ibid., p. 146.
- 70 Echeruo, ibid., p. 142.
- 71 Moore, "The Imagery of Death...", Africa, XXXVIII (1968), p. 57.
- 72 Moore, ibid., p. 57.
- 73 Dathorne, "Tradition and the African Poet", Présence Africaine, 63 (1967); p. 159.
- 74 Dathorne, "Ritual and Ceremony...", Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 5 (July 1968); p. 82.
- 75 Echeruo, op. cit., p. 146.
- 76 Dathorne, "Ritual and Ceremony...", p. 82.
- 77 Okigbo in Dathorne, ibid., p. 82.
- 78 Dathorne, "Tradition and the African Poet", pp. 160-161.
- 79 Dathorne, "Ritual and Ceremony...", p. 81.
- 80 Ali Mazrui, "Meaning versus Imagery in African Poetry", Présence Africaine, 66 (1968), p. 49.

- 81 Echeruo, "Traditional and Borrowed Elements...", p. 152.
- 82 Dathorne, "Ritual and Ceremony...", p. 83.

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